

FEBRUARY 1912
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RED BOOK

MAGAZINE



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THE RED BOOK

MAGAZINE

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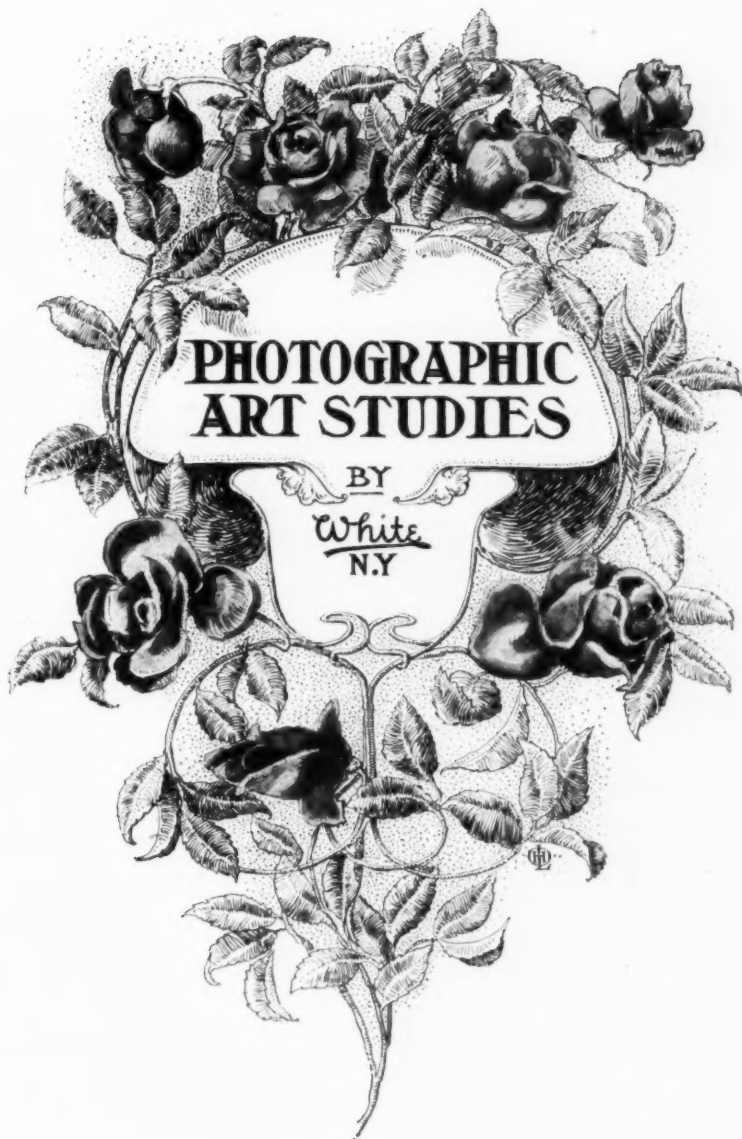
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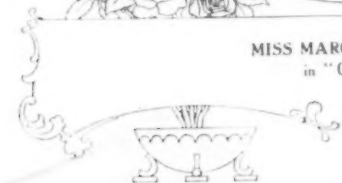


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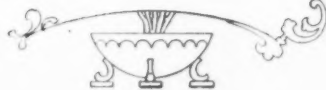


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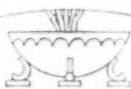


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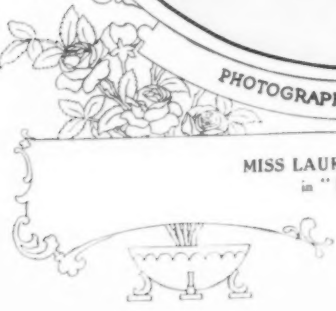
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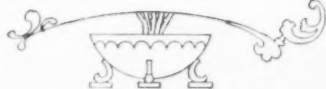
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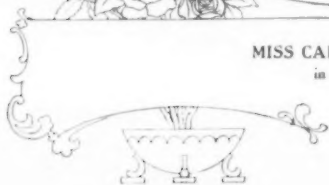
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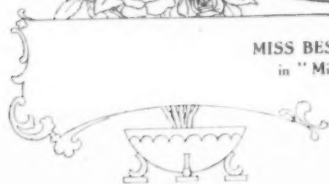
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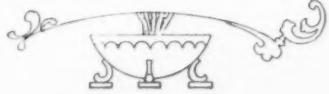


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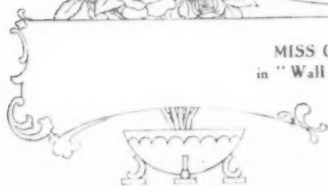


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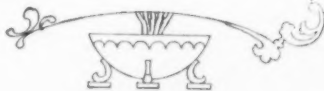


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To him it was another experience to be entered in his mental notebook
To accompany "The Factors In The Case"—page 683

THE RED BOOK

MAGAZINE

Vol. XVIII February 1912 No 4



Three Wise Men

by Arthur Train
*Author of "The Butler's Story,"
 "Artemas Quibble"*

Illustrated by Gayle Hoskins

HELLO!" called Dr. Ashley, taking up the receiver of the telephone to which he had been hurried by his butler from the luncheon table. "Yes, hello!"

"That you, Ashley?" rasped a broken voice, some fifty miles distant down the Maine coast, over the buzzing wire. "It's me—Tom Alexander. My boy's got appendicitis. No one to operate. You're the only decent surgeon within reach. Dr. Freemont—local man—says if we can't get you it's all over. Hear me?"

"Yes," replied the doctor, his youthful face hardening into that of the surgeon of sixty, "of course, I'll come. But, man, you're on an island twenty miles from the nearest town on the mainland. It'll take me a day to drive, and the trains are just as bad. How shall I get to you?"

"That's all right," came back his friend's voice. "The *Cormorant* is here with steam up, ready to start—I'll send her for you. It's three o'clock now—and Freemont says if you operate by nine to-night you may be able to save the boy's life. You'd just about make it."

"Held on a minute!"

Ashley's mind flashed quickly down the coast. If the *Cormorant* could be brought to the other side of Mount Desert he could drive across the island while she was on her way, meet her, and save nearly fifteen miles by sea. He knew the value of a minute in cases like this.

"Hello! Get this right!" he snapped into the receiver. "Send the yacht across to Pretty Marsh Harbor—that's between Mount Desert and Bartlett's Island. Your captain will know. There's no dock

there, but I can drop off the rocks into your launch, somehow. She ought to be there by six o'clock at the outside. You'll save over an hour in that way. I'll drive over and meet her. Understand?"

"Yes."

There was a thrill of hope in the voice at the other end of the wire. "God bless you, Jim! She'll be there."

"Keep up your nerve, old man. We'll pull you out, yet," chirped Ashley, throwing into his tones a professional confidence of which he had an abundant reserve.

Then he hung up the receiver and stood looking out through the half-turned leaves of the Japanese garden to where his guests were lingering over their coffee and cigars. Forty years of the severest sort of surgical training had left his heart as tender as that of a child. The tears came into his gray eyes and blurred the tree-tops as he thought of Tom Alexander sitting at the bedside of his only son, a boy of twelve, in the summer palace he had built on Eagle Island. What good were Tom's twenty millions that bright afternoon? What use the farm and gardens made with artificial soil on that corrugated ledge of rock? What use the deer in their thousand-acre park? The swimming pool, the tennis courts, the bowling alleys, the yachts and motor boats—without the boy? Ashley had never had a child of his own, and he groaned aloud as he thought of little Tom Alexander writhing on his cot beside the sunlit sea. Of course, he'd go—go a thousand miles to save the boy, or *any* boy for that matter, if only there was a way to do so. It was a lucky thing the *Cormorant*, Alexander's new two-hundred-and-twenty-foot steam yacht, had been finished in time to go into commission that spring. Without her—Ashley bit his lips; well, *with* her he'd be down at Eagle Island in time to operate—by artificial light.

There was little enough time as it was. Already the October sun was nearing the pine-ribbed crests of the nearer hills, for twilight falls early on the Maine coast in autumn, and the doctor must summon his assistants from the hospital,

get fresh ether, and order the team to take him across the island. He did not return to his guests but sent a message by the butler to his wife that he was suddenly called away, and set about making his preparations.

Forty-five minutes later a buckboard drawn by a strong pair of horses drove up to the door, and Ashley and Wakefield, his native assistant, who was one of the most skillful men with anesthetics in the state, climbed in.

"Put the valise under the seat," he cautioned the butler; "I'll *hold* the instruments. Yes, my heavy coat, please. Back to-morrow or next day. I'm on the telephone, if you want me for anything."

It was already four o'clock. The boy on Eagle Island had exhausted one of the six hours allowed him before receiving surgical relief. Ashley knew that his pulse was probably just a few beats faster, his burning forehead a fraction of a degree nearer one-hundred-and-five. Across his own brow blew the keen afternoon wind of autumn, bearing odors of sunburned forests mingled with the salt smell of ocean. For twenty years he had spent his late summers and early falls on the island and this was the time of year he loved it most. For now the autumn rains had laid the dust and washed the roads clean of the summer's grist, leaving them hard and furrowed by tiny gullies. Here and there clear, shallow pools lay in the track of the wheels, reflecting the azure of the sky, the high floating puffs of clouds, the yellow gold of the birches and the scarlet of the sumacs.

The horses' shoes cut clean and threw up soft, moist lumps of occasional brown mud. A few small birds flickered among the alders, and now and again a rabbit first hesitated and then jumped regretfully across the road before them, but as a whole, nature was resting. Broad awake in the lazy afternoon sunlight she was luxuriating after her summer, and drowsily lying without even drawing breath. The air had that warmth and yet that freshness that at once sends a glow to the heart and thrills the senses. The leaves had not yet fallen. On the mountain sides the background of the ever-

greens was mottled with irregular patches of brown, of purplish red, of rose—picked out here and there with one golden gleam of a single tree or one drop of scarlet blood. A few ochre leaves lay strewn across the road, imbedded in the mud or gilding the bottoms of the pools.

They climbed a ridge and saw behind them the blue waters of Frenchman's Bay, dotted with spruce-covered islands. The hills lay all around them, their tumbled outlines fixed in a wrinkled smile. To the west lay sixty miles of coast, island outlying island, with dim distant shapes of islands still beyond, bounded by the misty ghosts of vague hills to the northward and the still, even line of the horizon to the south. Along this hung little dots—the markers of ocean traffic along the great highway from Cape Sable to Pollock Rip.

The sun sank lower as they descended the other side of the ridge. Somewhere along the western shore of Mount Desert the *Cormorant* should be nosing her way, leaving a creaming wake to mark her course among the islands. But the doctor, straining his eye, could not see her anywhere. Perhaps some shoulder of mountain or dorsal of island concealed her. What if there were something the matter with her engine! He knew nothing of such things. Suppose she had not even started! Tom Alexander's only son might die! He looked about him at the glory of the hill-sides and a little lump swelled in his throat. There was no note of death in this radiance of the visible world; it was blush of health, not the iridescence of decay—the leap of sap at the first touch of the frost. Even as he looked, a white speck flashed in the rays of the sun and moved slowly out from behind a distant cape. There she was! Twenty miles away, but coming steadily, her great engines beating like a human heart in response to a father's need!

From this point their way plunged into valleys where the twilight had already gathered. The young doctor said nothing, for he came of the taciturn race of that rocky coast that rarely speaks for pleasure. Ashley himself had no de-

sire to talk, for his thoughts were all with the sick boy on Eagle Island. They turned into a narrow road that led along the shore, but separated from it by a heavy growth of young trees. Here the mist was settling in the hollows and the sun had disappeared. Steep declivities and abrupt hills made the horses steam as they threw themselves into the collars or struggled, without breechings, to hold back the load that forced them on. The young doctor put on his coat and asked if there would be any objection to his lighting a pipe. Ashley shook his head. He wished occasionally that he could smoke, himself, were it not for the stern requirements of his craft. At last they emerged from the woods and rattled across a small bridge over a tidal stream. A dank smell of sea-weed, of salt grass, of oozy flats, floated up from the marshes. The sky had darkened and a thin bank of cloud had pushed itself up from the west and had covered half the sky with a dark pall. At its edge a star or two twinkled faintly. They could no longer see the shapes of the mountains, and up the road the lights were already gleaming in the windows of a farm house.

"Goin' to be a devilish dark night," volunteered the driver, speaking for the first time.

"I'm afraid so," answered Ashley with a slight feeling of dread. "We are almost there, are we not?"

"Couple o' miles—that's all," answered the native shortly.

Daylight died to a fine yellow line over the western islands. Objects along the road became indistinguishable. Ashley knew that it was much later than six o'clock, for it had been necessary to go slowly the last part of the way. Presently they saw a cluster of houses and a glint of white fence. The driver made a quick turn and the wheels rolled over soft grass. Below them at what seemed an immense distance across the water could be seen a long row of lights.

"There she is!" exclaimed Wakefield.

The horses seemed to understand that speed was the essence of their master's contract, and went plunging across the fields almost at a gallop.

"They must have sent a boat in," said Ashley. "If only we can find it in this darkness!"

The driver made a horn of his hands and gave a long halloo. A moment later it was returned from some distance along the shore. Then they heard the splashing of a small propeller and the *chug-chug* of a launch. Ashley and the young doctor climbed out of the buckboard with their valises and stood waiting in the wet grass.

"Hello! Where are you?" came from the water.

"Here!" answered Ashley, climbing across the rocks to the water's edge.

"Careful! Wait a moment, sir!" admonished the second officer in charge of the launch. "Those rocks are covered with sea-weed and are slippery."

"I can't wait for that!" retorted Ashley, sharply. "There's a boy's life at stake!"

"I know—here, take my hand, sir!"

At that moment a blinding flash of light illumined the slime of the rocks and the reeking weeds that swathed them.

Ashley, half dazed, saw at his feet a mahogany launch, with two sailors and a mate in charge. The *Cormorant*, getting nervous at the delay, had thrown her search-light across the bay to find out the trouble. The two doctors passed in their bags and clambered clumsily into the launch. The yacht withdrew her search-light and the boat backed away from the shore. A moment more and they were racing towards the *Cormorant*, whose port-holes blazed like the windows of an office-building across the inky blackness of the water. He noted the strange resemblance borne by her wavering search-light to the *antennae* of some huge insect. Slowly moving, she lay lazily churning the waves, ready the moment that the launch should return to leap upon her way homeward. As they approached, the light at her gangway broke out and a white-coated steward and an officer in uniform stepped to the rail.

"All right, sir. Step aboard!" cried the mate, and Ashley swung himself up the slippery steps to the deck.

"Good-evening, doctor."

The man in uniform, a tall, grizzled veteran of the sea, stepped forward and touched his cap.

"How do you do?" answered Ashley.

"Are we on time?"

"Half-hour late, sir," replied the stern-faced captain. "Still, we may be able to make Eagle Island by nine o'clock. We've got a flood-tide with us—that's worth four knots an hour."

"How did you leave the boy?" asked Ashley, anxiously.

"Pretty bad, sir," said the other, turning away. "They're counting on you, sir."

"Then let's be off at once!"

The captain nodded and moved to the rail.

"Take in that launch there!"

The sailors sprang to the davits.

"Let her go—full speed!" he shouted to the officer on the bridge.

A bell tinkled, the engine throbbed rapidly, the yacht vibrated and leaped forward into the night. An icy wind swept around Ashley's legs and shoulders. He thanked himself for having brought his heavy coat instead of that light one.

"You'll find dinner ready for you in the saloon," said the captain. "If we can pick out our buoys we ought to make it, but it's going to be dark as a pocket and we'll have to use the search-light the entire way. None of us has ever been in here before and in the night one island looks just like another. If you care to come up on the bridge after dinner, I'll be there."

Ashley thanked him.

"I suppose we might as well eat," he commented to Wakefield. "I don't see how they are going to find their way through this maze of islands. The whole bay is thick with rocks and shoals."

The two doctors partook of their meal in silence, waited on deftly by two stewards. There was no sound save the steady throb of the engine and a slight rattle from the window casings. Outside, it was pitch black. Night had fallen in earnest.

Dinner over, Ashley threw on his coat and stepped out upon the deck. He could



At that moment a blinding flash of light illumined the rocks and the weeds that swathed them

hear nothing but the thump of the propeller and the rush of the water alongside, see nothing but a sparkling trail of phosphorescence sweeping towards the stern. Ahead, the search-light was bent in a long, tube-like shaft upon the water, showing a slowly heaving brown surface upon which floated occasional bunches of sea-weed. He turned and made his way up to the bridge. The captain in a great coat was pacing back and forth, a watch in his hand.

"Where are we?" asked the doctor.

"I figure we're somewhere off the Three Wise Men," the captain answered doubtfully. "It should be clear water as far as the beacon—on the Lone Virgin. That's eighteen miles—nautical—I've let her go W. three-quarter S. for—well, it's thirty-five minutes now—at fourteen knots. We ought to be picking up the black buoy by the first of the Wise Men. But the whole bay is so jam full of islands, and shoal water, I daresn't go by a single buoy marked on the chart without makin' sure where I am—Hi! There! What's that!"

"Island ahead, sir!" yelled the forward watch.

The captain sprang to the indicator and threw it across to "Full Speed Reverse." The engine groaned, the yacht heeled over, the propeller rattled in a frenzy as they gripped the water and shot backwards.

"Steady!" said the captain, throwing the indicator to "Stop."

The yacht lay still in a white, eddying froth. Faintly outlined in the hazy, distant circle, like a dissolving view on a stereopticon screen, Ashley saw the thin white line of a small island, low-lying and rocky, about a quarter-of-a-mile ahead.

"Lucky we had the search-light," ejaculated the captain. "I'd like to know what island *that* is! I never saw it before!"

He bent over the table of frosted glass under which lay the chart, illuminated by concealed lights, and marked off a distance with his dividers.

"Hey there!" he called forward. "Do any of you know that island?"

There was no response.

"The Three Wise Men make a kind of a triangle. So far as I can see that could be either of 'em, or then again it might be Hardwood Island or Trumpet Island. Now it depends on *which* one it is whether we get the right buoy to lay our course W. one-fourth S. for the Virgin. But if we're in behind one of 'em we may run aground. Turn that search-light to starboard!"

The man in the bow swept the misty shaft of light along the surface of the water.

"Hold it!" shouted the captain, as a white object flashed sharply. "What's that?"

"Lobster buoy, sir," said the watch.

The captain muttered an oath. "Keep her moving!" he growled.

Ashley strained his eyes after the light, fascinated like an insect by a flame. Out of the heavy blackness of the surrounding night, things on or in the water sprang into blazing relief in truly startling fashion. The water and waves themselves looked brown, but the objects were picked out in burning white. Here, masses of weed floating on the surface shone in silver streaks, their edges tinged with flame; there, a sleeping sea-gull shone like a gleaming jewel, then rose, circled and flickered like a frosted moth in candle light. Lobster buoys, floating logs, sticks of wood, all glittered as if illuminated inside by electricity. When the edges of the waves broke they glinted with opalescence.

The mate came hurrying up in response to a summons from the captain. He knew they were off something, but which of several islands it was he could not tell. He had never been in that part of the bay before. Now as they threw the light in wider circles they saw other islands to starboard, all small, low and rocky, lying one beside the other—but no buoys.

"We must have over-run that buoy on Hardwood," said the mate. "But if we have, we ought to be able to see that other one marked there at the end of Trumpet Island. This place has got me! There don't seem to be *no* buoys. We can't just go blind in here, and these islands all look alike."

They had now been lying still for twenty-five minutes, with the entire crew trying to make out a buoy which might or might not be there.

"Captain," said Ashley in a strained voice, "how soon can we get to Eagle Island if we should find the buoy at once?"

"Barring accidents and assuming that we make all our marks and don't lose any buoys, one hour to The Virgin, one hour across to Pemetic Reach and half an hour to Eagle Island Harbor—two hours and a half."

"But it's nearly eight o'clock now," exclaimed Ashley nervously. "It would be half-past ten by the time we got there! You know what that means!"

The captain turned a drawn face towards his companion.

"Doctor!" he said, and his voice trembled, "I'd give my right hand if we could pick up that buoy this minute. But if we go on and run the boat aground we'll *never* get there!"

"Can't you go *through* these islands and so right across to Eagle?" asked Ashley helplessly.

The captain shook his head.

"We draw fourteen feet. This string of islands and shoal water stretches eastward twenty-three miles. There is no passage through them for a boat of our draught. We've got to go 'round them and back halfway again to make Pemetic Reach. If there was a channel *through* we could make Eagle Island in fifty-five *minutes* from here. It's just as if a wall that you couldn't climb lay in front of you, with the house just on the other side."

"Then every minute we lie here means that we lose that much time!" Ashley's heart sank. "Poor Tom!" he whispered.

But the search-light reflected only the flare of the sea-gull's wings.

The two men cast together by chance in a common endeavor to save a human life stood silently side by side upon the bridge, the heart of each tortured by the same hopeless dread.

"There's only one thing we can do," finally announced the captain. "And that is to back out of here and run south until we make Pond Island Light. Then we

can get our bearings and feel our way down into the Reach."

"How long will that take?" inquired the doctor.

"If we do that we won't make Eagle Island until after midnight," muttered the other.

Ashley wrung his hands.

"The boy may be dead by that time!" he groaned bitterly.

The captain turned a set face towards him.

"There never was such a kid!" he almost sobbed. "The finest little feller. Used to come up here and steer—"

Suddenly he bent forward and shaded his eyes.

"What's that to starboard? Hallo, forward! Is that a boat?"

"Dory ahead, sir—starboard bow!" shouted the watch.

"Thank God!" ejaculated the captain. "Now, at any rate, we'll find out where we are."

II

John Spurling had lived with his wife and daughter for sixteen years on Hardwood Island, so called from the fact that it boasted a few undersized maples, birches and beeches, in addition to a small forest of evergreens. He wrested a precarious living from the sea, by means of lobster-pots, a trawl, and a small herring-weir which he operated on shares with a capitalist from Goose Cove who had put up the three hundred dollars necessary to underwrite the venture. The island was a pretty good place for sheep, and Spurling owned five—he had once hoped to buy more. He also at one time had owned a cow, but it had proved difficult to continue her milk-giving qualities, a difficulty overlooked at the moment of her purchase. Winter and summer he was out before sunrise, pulling his traps or setting his trawl, and once a week a small motor-boat put in from across the bay and carried away his catch. But it was a hard life. "A hell of a life for a girl!" he periodically remarked to Ingrid, his Swedish wife, thereby referring to Regna, now nearly fifteen years of age.

Spurling, himself, was a tall, dark, silent man of fifty, and in his youth he had done better. At one time, indeed, he had owned a third of a fishing smack and had gone to the Banks, but one fierce autumn they had lost her, uninsured—gale-driven on the rocks of Mount Desert—and he had lost heart as well. About that time, too, he had fallen sick and had continued more or less, generally more, "ailin'" ever since. Not that his pain incapacitated him for work. Occasionally, to be sure, he would set his teeth at the agony of it, but there would be long stretches—months indeed—when he felt almost well. Once, at the earnest solicitation of his wife he had gone up to Bangor and consulted a physician there, who diagnosed his trouble as acute dyspepsia and told him to stop eating fish and to drink milk! This unconscious sarcasm had almost made the slow-moving fisherman angry, but in the end he had only laughed grimly, paid his two dollars, and departed without comment.

And so he labored on, trying to earn enough extra to buy magazines and periodicals for his wife and to send Regna to board in the winters at North West Harbor where there was a good school. But this year had been a bad season all 'round. Two of the sheep had died, the herring had gone somewhere else, and there was a paucity of lobsters. His pain, too, had come back with a strange intensity so that at times he had to curl up at the bottom of his dory and let the boat drift until the spasm had passed. Finally, in desperation, the family had packed up and moved across to the mainland, where his wife had secured work as a kitchen helper in a boarding-house, and he had gotten employment on a farm. But the season was short and board was high, and the first of September had found them, including Regna—a pretty, lithe little girl with rose-brown cheeks—back at "Hardwood." This year they had no money to send her to North West Harbor and they all looked forward to the winter with foreboding.

Yet John Spurling loved the coast upon which he had been born and where

he strove to live. Although he could not have said so in the proper words, he reveled in the clear, sparkling atmosphere, the brilliant sunlight, the rocky, pine clad islands, the rigor of the life, the song of the wind-swept sea. Deep down in his heart the strongest emotion of his being, next to his love for Ingrid and the child, was this feeling of unity with nature. Often he would pause in hauling his traps to watch the gulls as they rested so lightly upon the water, or the serried bands of white cloud marching across the sky like ranks of warriors driven before the northwest wind, or the moving shadows darkening the bays and islands, or the wrinkled hills of distant Mount Desert.

Sometimes in the morning, when his pain had left him, he felt ecstatic with the joy of it—of even *his* life—and he would stretch his arms and go singing down the beach to his weir, or call Regna to help him with his traps.

As the years went on he came to know every nook and corner of the coast for fifty miles in both directions. Each little bay, each tiny inlet, each twinkling channel, had some hidden secret known only to him. Here he had lost a trap; there he had caught a miraculous net of fish; over on that sand spit he had found that the ducks liked to pause in their southward flight; behind that ridge there was an unknown field of cranberries; in that inlet grew enormous clams.

So, too, he learned the rocks and reefs and their real names—not always the names given on the charts—and he learned also that in some places the soundings were given as too shallow or too deep. Year by year, too, he noticed certain changes wrought by wave and tide. Where his weir was, for example, on Hardwood Island and between it and First Wise Man (The Flying Place, was its right name—why, no one knew) the tide had sucked out a narrow passage in the sand through which even a small schooner might go safely if you only knew just where to turn, and thus escape the twelve or fourteen miles necessary to go round the islands. He had watched this grow year by year and in a way measured his own age by it.



He had had no luck and the pain had come on again worse than ever

Some day, when he should be dead, the islands would no longer present a barrier to vessels voyaging north and south. He had been a good navigator in his day, one of the best on the coast. Sometimes, if it had not been for the wife and child, he felt that he might have gone back to a seafaring life. But he did not complain. Life seemed good to him, and he labored on simply to live.

Spurling had come home early that afternoon. He had had no luck and the pain had come on again—worse than ever. Six times he had been forced to stop in rowing back from the weir, and when he had staggered to the house he stumbled into a corner without a word and sat down with his jaw set and his head in his hands.

"I'm awful sorry, Yack!" said his wife, from where she was working at the stove. "A hot cup of tea will do you goot and mak' you feel some better."

"No, thanks, Ingrid," he muttered. "I don't want nothin'."

"I vish you had some Yamaica yinger," continued his wife. "Dot seem to help you sometime, but, there aint a drop in the house. I meant to borrow some of Mrs. Wasgett when I was over to Seal Cove, but I fergot about it."

"Oh, I'll be all right," he replied, gasping.

Regna came in at that moment from the beach with an armful of driftwood.

"What's the matter, daddy?" she asked, putting her arms around him.

"Nothin', sweetheart!" he answered, turning his head to kiss her. Then he got up and without a word went into the next room and threw himself down on the bed.

At eight o'clock he felt that he could bear the pain no longer, for it coursed through his veins like molten lead. He had never known such agony before.

"I'm goin' to row over to Seal Cove and git some ginger!" he muttered, coming out into the kitchen.

"Want me to go with you, daddy?" asked Regna.

Spurling nodded. If he had one of his spells in the boat she would be needed.

"We'll be back in a couple of hours,"

he said to his wife; "I don't feel so awful bad!"

It was a sooty night and they felt their way with difficulty across the beach. To the west the yellow bead of Casco Light winked feebly at regular intervals. Their own course lay eastward four miles without guidance through the blackness. Regna clambered into the dory and her father shoved it off and swung himself in over the bow. Then he lifted the oars into the rowlocks and pulled swiftly around the point. Darkness and light to him were both alike. He could have smelt his way along the coast in a fog. The next instant, half blinded, they were in the focus of the *Cormorant's* search-light.

"A yacht!" cried Regna, covering her eyes with her hands.

III.

"It's a boat all right!" exclaimed the captain. "Man in it and a girl!"

He took the megaphone from its hook beside the binnacle and pointed it towards the boat, the occupants of which had ceased rowing.

"Hello, there!" he called across the brown, oily water.

"Shift your light!" came back faintly; "we can't see!"

The mate threw the misty white pillar skywards and in a moment they could hear the sound of resumed oars coming nearer. Impatiently they waited, anxious to hail and get their information, but knowing well that the rower would not speak until he had come alongside, rested on his oars, and inspected the yacht, after the manner of those who live on islands. Presently, however, the dory loomed out of the darkness and the man ceased rowing.

"Hello!" shouted the captain. "can you tell us what island that is over there?"

Spurling turned his head and started to reply, but the exertion of rowing had brought on the pain again. It shot through his groin like a red hot sword and he dropped his oars and crumpled up in the boat, groaning with agony. Regna caught the oars and climbed

across the seats to her father's assistance.

"What's the matter down there?" cried the captain sharply. "Can't you speak? Throw on that search!"

And then Ashley saw, in the white glare, a fisherman lying in the bottom of a dory and a young girl with his head in her arms.

"That man's sick!" he ejaculated.

The captain nodded.

"Lower the gig and bring that fellow aboard!" he ordered.

Assisted by friendly, yet impatient hands, John Spurling dragged himself limply up the gangway and staggered to the engine-room hatch. Under the electric light his unshaven face was like that of a dead man.

Dr. Ashley poured out a half tumbler of brandy and gave it to him to drink.

"Where are we?" demanded the captain, as the man opened his eyes. "What island is that?"

"That's Hardwood Island," answered Spurling, weakly. "You've run by the buoy off the Three Wise Men—that is, if you're going west."

"We'll be going west all right in a minute!" almost shouted Larsen. "Say, if you know this bay, I'll give you ten dollars to pilot us around the Lone Virgin as far as Pemetic Beach. This gentleman here is a doctor, and he's got to get to Eagle Island to-night to operate on a dying boy—ought to be there by nine o'clock—Now, as it is he'll be nearly three hours late, and the child may die. Say, man, will you come?"

Through the painful glare of the lights, the throbbing of his brain, and the killing thrusts through his body, Spurling heard vaguely and but dimly understood. The tense faces of the men about him, however, shouted their message. Some one was dying—like him. Somebody needed a doctor—who must not be late, yet who was hours late already in the race with Death. He thought of the Flying Place and its winding channel of swiftly swirling water.

"How much do you draw?" he gasped between the jabs of pain in his side.

"Fourteen feet."

"I know a passage—it aint marked on

the charts—between the Wise Men and Hardwood—that at flood tide is good for four fathoms."

"What! You do! Eh?" shouted the captain.

"The currents have dug it out in the last five or six years. It's high water now, and if you want to chance it—"

Captain Thomas hesitated. His employer's beautiful new yacht was as dear to him as a child. If he should run her on the rocks or get her aground—her owner's son would surely die. He looked mutely at the doctor.

"It's our only chance, captain," said the latter. "If we don't take it, it will be morning before we reach Eagle Island."

"Come up on the bridge!" answered Larsen, putting his arm around Spurling and lifting him to his feet. Ashley followed close behind. He could see that the man was dying—it did not take a surgeon to appreciate that. When once they were through the islands he would attend to him. Meanwhile the *man* must suffer—for the sake of the *boy*. He uttered a silent prayer that they might not be too late.

The bell rang in the engine room and the indicator pointed at "Ahead—Slow." The *Cormorant* shook for a moment and then moved forward.

"Keep the search-lights dead ahead!" shouted the captain as he spun the wheel to starboard. "Now, where's your passage?"

Spurling, half hanging over the brass railing of the bridge, pointed at the weir before them.

"Over there," he answered. "Bear off well to nor'ward. See that island? That's the first Wise Man. Now head her for that rocky point."

With her search-light blazing before her the *Cormorant* stole silently towards the island. For a moment it looked as if she were going straight for shore; then a narrow passage not more than forty feet wide opened behind the weir. Absolutely sheltered, the surface of the water was like a mirror save where here and there the minnows leaped in silver showers. On either side the rocky ledges cut sharply against the background of the

night like the flies of a theatre. Looking over the side Ashley could see the white, shelving bottom on either hand.

They turned the point and the passage widened to a shallow bay, in which sand banks raised their heads here and there and rocky "thrumcaps" lifted a lone pine or two sheer from the water. The search-light, playing swiftly from port to starboard, showed land on all sides. Dead ahead a reef broke the surface, covered with hundreds of sleeping sea-gulls. They shone like a bank of riven snow, motionless, reflected, row upon row in the still water, until at last one sleepy bird moved its head and stirred. A wave of motion ran along the rock. Then suddenly the night was filled with the mighty flapping of countless wings.

Once more they turned, circled the reef, threaded their way between some lobster buoys, and again entered a narrow channel beside a tide tip on whose surface wheeled flecks of circling foam. The captain shook his head. A few feet to the right or to the left and the *Cormorant* would rip off her keel or tear out her propeller. What if they should strike? Yet this white-faced fisherman, with his hands pressed to his sides, seemed to know what he was about. What was the *Cormorant* to the life of little Tom Alexander!

Even as the thought crossed his mind the search-light lost itself in the open sea behind the islands, touching one pointed cap and leaping into the void beyond.

"We're through!" gasped Spurling. Then he slid silently to the deck.

Captain Thomas glanced at the chart and signaled "Full speed ahead." The *Cormorant* bounded forward with a whirr from her engines.

"Take the wheel, Jurgensen. West by north, three-quarters west. Pemetic light bears north-west."

Dr. Ashley already had thrown his coat beneath the prostrate fisherman and was quickly feeling him over with super-sensitive hands. Assisted by Higgins and the captain he dragged him down the steps of the bridge and into the saloon. Here they bolstered him up upon the table, and the assistant took Spurling's temperature and pulse.

"One hundred and five," said Higgins. "Pulse one hundred and seventy-three."

"How long to Eagle Island, Captain?" asked the doctor shortly, with a professional gleam in his gray eye.

"With a forced draught and barring accidents—thirty-nine minutes," answered Captain Thomas doubtfully.

"We've no time to lose, Higgins," said Ashley briskly, opening his bag. "Got your ether handy?"

IV

It was exactly eleven minutes past nine when the *Cormorant*, roaring under her forced draught, shot through the darkness past the striped channel buoy at the end of Pemetic Reach and, with the search-light playing right and left across the waves, raced towards her moorings off the point upon which stood the Alexander cottage. The launch had already been lowered almost to the surface of the water, the blue flame under her boiler flaring grotesquely upon the face of the sailor trying to start her engine. Inside the saloon Ashley, who was bending busily over the silent form of Spurling, heard the bell to stop and lifted a tense face.

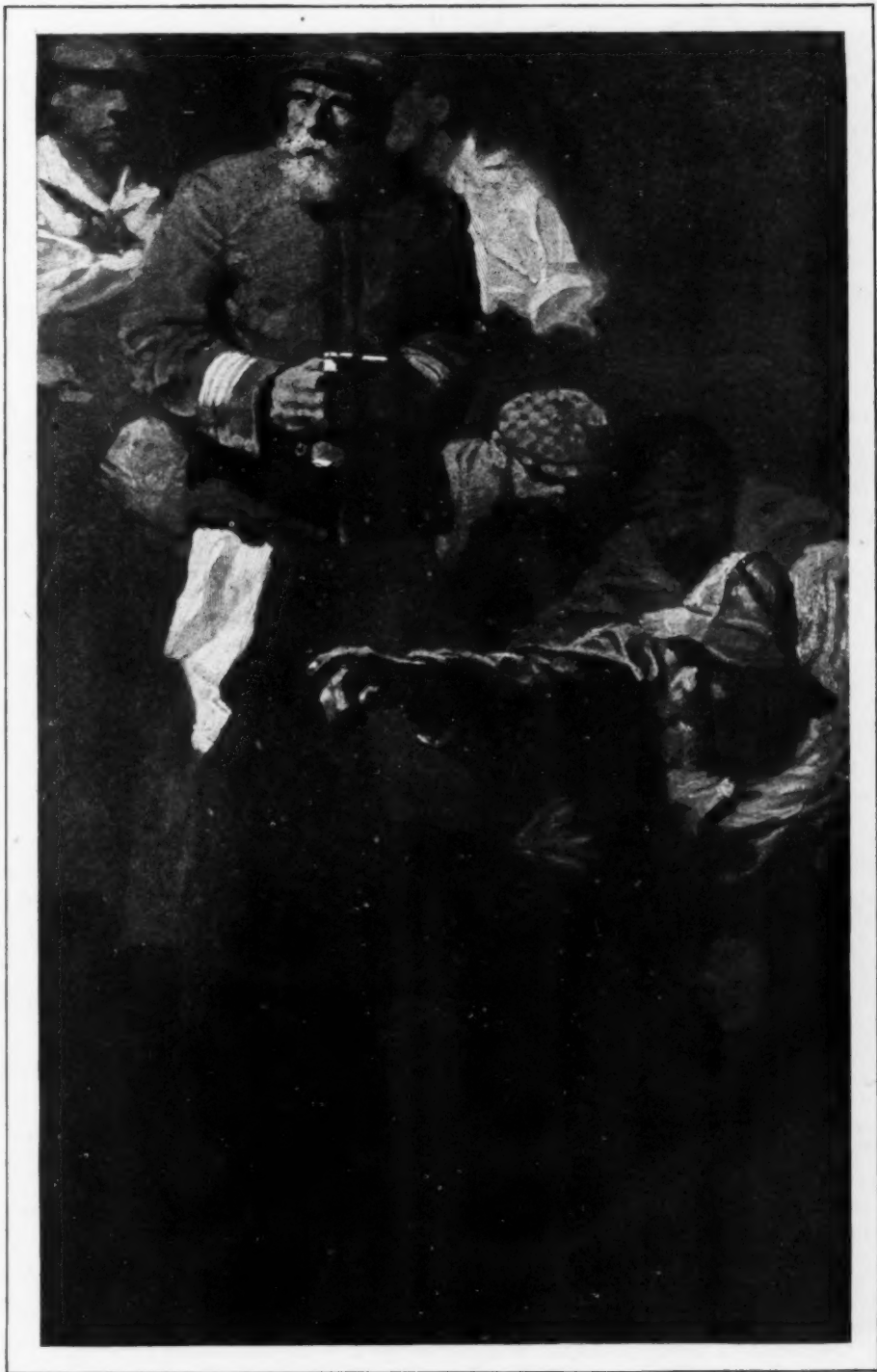
"Good job we tackled this fellow when we did. Worst case of perforation I ever saw. How he lived long enough to-night to reach the yacht I don't know. He must have a constitution of iron. An ordinary man would have died of one of those earlier attacks years ago."

"Queer thing—picking a man out of a boat like that and cutting him up without hardly so much as by your leave," answered Higgins.

"If he hadn't agreed it would have been suicide," remarked Ashley, authoritatively. "Now we must sterilize these instruments and turn him over to his daughter. He'll do well enough until we can get back later."

Tom Alexander met them on the dock and clasped Ashley in his arms. His tension was almost at the breaking point.

"Thank God, Jim!" he cried, the tears slipping down his bronzed cheeks. "I've been standing here straining my eyes



"That's Hardwood Island," answered Spurling weakly. "You've run by the buoy"

ever since six o'clock! Yes, Tom's holding his own, and Freemont says if you operate at once he doesn't anticipate any trouble. Oh, it's good to see you! I've been watching the search-light for the last hour, worrying for fear the engine might break down or that you'd miss a buoy. Oh, Jim! Good old Jim! And punctual as usual!"

He dashed his hand across his eyes and half dragged the doctor up the steps of the dock and across the lawn.

An hour later Ashley, followed by Fowler and Higgins, emerged from the sick-room of little Tom Alexander. His father, who was loitering anxiously outside, searched their faces with suspicious eyes, for the indications of some hidden fear in which he might not be permitted to share.

"No, Tom— It's all right!" said Ashley, slapping his friend on the shoulder. "No need to worry. The boy's in prime condition, and the operation was in plenty of time—thanks to that fellow in the boat— By George! I'd clean forgotten him. Hurry down to the yacht, Higgins, and make him comfortable. I'll pay him a professional visit later—but not just now. Fact is, I'm all in! This is the first time I've ever performed two operations by artificial light in one evening. Can you give me a brandy and soda and a cigar?"

"Can I?" answered Alexander. "Just come down to the library! But what do you mean by *two* operations? My boy didn't—"

"No, he didn't have two appendixes!" laughed Dr. Ashley. "But the fact is, I took the liberty of bringing a patient along with me and operating on him as we came down the Reach. He had a much worse case of it than your Tom, but I expect him to get through all

right. I managed to take *him* in time, too."

And then the doctor briefly told Alexander of the coincidence by which he had happened upon Spurling in the hour of their need, which happened to be the hour of his need also.

"Then he saved my boy's life!" cried Alexander. "Fetched the *Cormorant* through those islands, did he? Why, it seems to me like Providence! Bless the chap! If he and Tom pull out of this together I'll give him a sea-going vessel of his own."

That is all that is relevant and material in the story of how the two hundred and twenty foot *Cormorant*, drawing fourteen feet of water, squeaked through a chain of islands with a dying lobsterman pilot—*via* an uncharted channel, to bring a doctor to a dying boy, save to add that both the lobsterman and boy got well and were firm friends forever after. For now the lobsterman is called "Captain" Spurling and has command of a fifty-foot yawl in which the boy goes cruising with his father every summer, and when he is not on duty he lives with his Ingrid and Regna in a little white cottage around the turn of the island and catches lobsters for the Alexanders and their visitors. Later on, when Tom goes away to school, and the holidays are over, the Spurlings move up to the big house and keep it warm and clean during the long winter months, while Regna goes to the Normal School at Bangor.

And if you look on the chart between the first Wise Man and Hardwood Island, you will see two striped buoys and a passage marked Spurling's Cut—which may be an accidental joke on the part of the government lithographer.

"Sittin' Breeches"

BY MAXWELL SAVAGE

QUEER name, aint it? Sounds like Sittin' Bull or some other Indian: but it fitted him all right. Used to sit 'round all time. 'Course he couldn't do much else perhaps, he bein' on one end of a chain and a cottonwood on t' other."

"Whom are you talkin' about?" I asked.

"Well, I aint talkin' about no *man*, though there's some as say—and I guess they're right—that he was what they call a facesmile of man's ancestors.

"I'm talkin' about a monkey, an' right here an' now I feel like talkin', an' I want to give you his biography. They write 'em about *men* who do things.

"Well, this small edition of our ancestors done things, too. He kept a family cheerful for a year and he give his life fer one on 'em. Don't know as he knew he was doin' it, but he done it all the same. And that's more'n most of us *humans* do, either the cheerful or the right sort o' dyin' part."

We were sitting under a group of cottonwoods in the dusty sand at the Box K ranch.

It was noon and all about us the sun beat down hot and steady, and the heat vibrations danced close to the ground. But we were comfortable under the trees, close to a small patch of bright alfalfa and a broken-edged cement tank of water some forty feet square.

It was called a "ranch" as some of the camps, there in the Mojave, are called cities.

The name lends dignity, is in the nature of a prophecy, for there the young men see visions of to-morrow and the old men dream dreams of yesterday.

But the whole oasis was not more than two acres in extent and all about it was desert, sloping gently down on one side till stopped by a long ridge of out-cropping rock which looked like slag in

midday, but which became a wall of fairy land under sunset and sunrise and moon.

On the other side the sand sloped upward for five miles to the barrier of the San Bernardino range and, to the east and the west, it swept away to the edge of things.

From the west to the east went a road, in and out through the dusty, silvery sage, turning and bending as though warped by the hot days and the cool nights.

In fact the "ranch" was little else than an elaborated water-hole, though a half-breed family lived there—a center for cattle in winter, a spot for refreshment and recreation of travelers in summer.

As I sat there sensing my comfort and watching the wind-devils draw up from the sand and scurry away, thinking of the dreariness of having to live there, my companion broke in again with his monkey story and, as he seemed to want to talk and as there wasn't anything else to do, I listened.

"As I was sayin', right in this here place some thirty years ago there lived a family, or wasn't I sayin' it? Anyway, there did. How do I know? That's my business and I've lived in these parts some time, son.

"It wasn't the same place then as now; then it was bigger an' more fertile, several acres o' good ground an' more trees an' a tidy house an' barn. There was the makin's of a real ranch right where we be. But they was owned by a man who was like one o' these here desert rivers—they make a great start in the hills an' hump it out onto the sand as if they was goin' ter go somewheres an' do something. Then, what the story-book writers call 'the heat an' stress o' life' meets up with 'em an' shrivels 'em up an' makes 'em discouraged, an' they

sink out o' sight an' don't get nowheres.

"That was the way it was with *him*. He made a mighty fine start of it all, but if I was trying to be poetical about it I'd say, lem'me see, I'd say that the sands o' life jest choked all his flumes so's the waters o' kindness an' decency an' honest livin' couldn't flow through 'em; but I aint no poet, so, if you want to hear, I'll tell it in ord'nary wordin'.

"It's a darn strange mix-up all through—this monkey, 'Sittin' Breeches,' an' men, an' a woman—but so's life.

"This man and his brother, ten years younger, took over this ranch thirty-odd year ago, as I said. Things looked prosperous. Had the whole desert ter run their cattle on in winter and there was the hills fer 'em in summer. They sure was to be envied; neither on 'em hitched; just the two on 'em with all the land and water they needed an' their cattle increasin'. But them two was different, somehow. Queer how two same-born brothers can get such differin' points o' view on about everything that comes along. The older, he was always for tryin' short cuts to everything and, as he owned the ranch, mostly, it was the younger's play to sit close an' not say much. It's all right to take a short cut acrost a field if yer don't muss up the crops, but when yer do 'twould er been better to stick to the trail. I've had a good many years to size up that older feller, an' the more I've thought the certainer I am that all his trouble come from tryin' ter short-cut in all his doin's an' thinkin'. An' then, ter bolster up his self-justifyin' arguments, he got ter liquorin' up.

"Now mind me, I aint ag'in' liquor by and large, but it gets me why so many blamed fools lets it get them. Superfluous use of it sure does send 'em up fer calamity every time.

"But before he begun short-cuttin' all certainly went well. There was tight rows o' eucalyptus an' pepper trees ter keep the northers from pushin' the sand up across the grass; the cattle kept growin' in numbers an', for a few years, all was fine's could be. There warn't no neighbors ter bother; the brothers was

busy days an' tired nights, and town once every few months was enough for them.

"Then things begun ter happen, for late one spring after the cattle had been driven up ter the *cienegas* in the mountains, the older brother set off for 'Frisco on some land business. The younger just held things down, s'posin' his brother would be gone about a month. But time pulled out an' out till at last, after two months an' a half, the elder came down this here road, an' he warn't ridin' neither. He was drivin' a bran' new wagon, an' when he pulled up, out o' the dust an' the wagon stepped a woman. No, she warn't a woman; she was a girl, but she was his wife. He'd run across her up there ter the city. She was lonesome and good lookin' an' good, an' he was handsome. Guess that sums it up, how they happened ter get hitched. Anyhow, here she was, right here in this lonesome hot-hole, an' she city bred an' brought up on those 'Frisco sea-breezes that come along punctual every noon.

"They say as she didn't know nothin' about a ranch. She was handy in the house, though, an' she was healthy. But she was near fifteen years younger'n he an' good-natured. He was one o' them unchangeable sort er fellers—no patience fer man, er woman, er beast that didn't set up an' beg, or jump through, or play dead just when he wanted 'em to. Even that wouldn't have been so bad, but for one o' them reasons nobody can ever savvy, he, with all you'd think he could want, got to gettin' worse'n peevish an' ornery, got to drinkin' habitual. Tellin' it short order, he got to bein' brutal. Not that he ever hit her; they say he never done *that*, but there's ways an' ways fer a cuss of a husband to be brutal to a woman without ever usin' his muscles. Specially when the woman's as far out o' her natural surroundin's as this one was here in this stretch o' hell.

"'Course a baby come along after a while—a girl. Lucky 'twas, 'cause with him neglectin' her she could sorter turn easier ter one o' her own sex. It was mighty almighty hard fer her ter get

used ter these surroundin's, but she done it as far as her outward signs went, so they tell. That's one thing I take off my hat to the ladies fer: they can make the best of any cheat-bargain when once they're in fer it.

"Well, let's see, the baby come. Tha. helped. Then, o' course—couldn't er been different—she just naturally, in her decent heart, got to dependin' on the younger brother; not fer any o' this *soft* sort o' sympathy, mind you—not any o' that stuff with her—but fer human companionship.

"First place he was nearer her age and they thought nearer *alike*; then he gave her a cheerful word when all she got from her husband was a grunt. She didn't fall in love with him—never entered her head—leastwise not then. He did with her, though; couldn't help it. You would've yourself if you'd been there. But he didn't say nothin' about it. Not wantin' to rile his brother, not wantin' to pile up her troubles, he managed ter stand round when he'd 've liked ter jump in.

"So he kept his mouth shut, as I've heard, till one day when the kid was about five year old he couldn't stand the pressure no longer. So what did he do but pull his freight. His brother was glad enough to buy out his small share so's ter get rid of him. But when it come to leavin' *her* it was different. I cal'ate she guessed what was tearin' him up by the way he said good-by. And the kid, she come out and the last thing she done was to ask him to send her a monkey. She'd got it in her small head, from a book he'd been showin' her on South America—that there was where he was goin'.

"Well, he did go there, and there he stayed, workin' on a placer. He must have been lonesome—Lord! there aint no name fer that kind o' lonesomeness, I guess. Down there in that there place he must er seen nothin' but this here place and them what was livin' here.

"One day he bought a monkey from a nigger, him havin' in mind, sort o' vague, the wish o' the little girl. That monk was one o' them funny little beg-

gars, stood about two feet high an' had a little cap of gray fur on his black head. Guess there must be some kin 'tween men and them creatures 'cause those two got thicker'n amalgam. He'd talk an' the little beggar'd try to savvy what he was drivin' at. All the time he couldn't keep this place out of his head nor the fact that the kid had asked for a monkey. Well, he didn't want to smash up home matters here, but he did want the little woman to know where he was so's if she ever *did* need him she'd know where ter find him. Result of all this blame thinkin' he decided ter take a chance on killin' two birds with one stone. What did he do? He got a small locket and he spent six months teachin' that early edition of human-kind to care for it more'n he'd care for anything else on the face o' creation. Then, when he felt sure, from makin' him think that locket meant food ter him by never givin' him his eats till he held the locket careful-like, he put his name an' address in it, chained it round his neck, an' shipped him all the way here to her.

"You see he must 'er hoped that she would understand what that there name and address spelled for her, sort of, 'if you need me any old time send fer me.'

"Well, things didn't pan out same's he'd planned. Never do. Sittin' Breeches, that's what they came ter call him, arrived all right, though mad all through an' sick o' the travelin' an', o' course, poor devil, scared plumb ter death. The kid, though, was tickled most ter pieces, but the father thought it was all a darned nuisance and blamed idiotic.

"How ter get the cuss safe out o' the wooden cage was more'n they knew. They opened her up by knockin' off a couple er slats, and 'fore they knew it he just naturally sneaked it for the open an' liberty. Sick he was o' that cage and scared clear out er his wits. The minute he was out he cut fer the nearest hidin' he saw, a big old bunch of mesquite. And as the Lord would have it, seems like, he no more'n got inter that patch o' brush than he meets up with a rattler.

"Now, let me tell you, if there's one

thing that'll turn one o' them ancestors of ours inside out with fright it's a snake. Them that knows says it's 'cause up a tree or on the ground in the forests, which is their native ha'nt, they can't ever be sure of gettin' away from snakes, the big kind what eats 'em. Right here also I remark that that's why most of us humans is scared o' snakes. Stands ter reason—we've inherited that fear o' theirs.

"Well, Sittin' Breeches, he like ter jumped clear through the top o' that bush when he seen that side-winder. He got tangled up, caught the chain o' that locket on a tough branch, busted it off an' left her hangin'. All his devotion what he'd been taught to that locket left him then and there, an' he come out inter the open full tilt an' them never seein' he'd even *had* a locket.

"Sooner or later they caught him up a gum-tree, by coaxin' an' feedin' him, an' he became one o' the family. Funny, mighty funny, what friends a darned left-over like a monkey can become! They say, except fer his likin' ter bust things, that he just worked his way inter their affections. They rigged up a sort er trolley wire from a cottonwood to a post; then they got a long, light chain, one end ter his belt an' t'other to a ring on the wire, an' there he was. He could roam back an' forth quite a bit and had a house at one end of his route. But now an' then they'd unhitch him from the wire an' he'd tote round with the youngster, she a-holdin' onter the chain fer fear o' losin' him.

"Them that seen him say sometimes he'd sit a long time just dreamin', looked like, thinkin', lookin' off 'cross country. Guess he was wishin' he was back with his own folks; so here he'd sit an' sit; that's what got him his name. An' again he'd be full er the devil, wantin' ter play, an' them's the times he'd cheer up them people fer days at a time, 'cept the husband. *He* just naturally wouldn't enjoy *nothin'*. But Sittin' Breeches was that full o' curiosity, an' teasin', an' play, an' the spirit o' destruction that you couldn't help lovin' him, leastwise unless you were one o' these humans

that's got a misplaced sense o' humor and a chronic grouch.

"He sure kept that child and her mother laughin' an' perked up. But the father, well, ter get on, he was goin' worse steady. Liquor seemed the only thing that pleased him an' that made him mean. He let the place run down 'cause he was too busy over there to Eagle City."

He pointed south to where the blue range paled in the distance.

"You know that forsook hole we come through yesterday? Well, that was Eagle City when she was boomin'. He got ter spendin' most er his time an' money up there till one night a combine o' cards, whiskey an' a sheep-man finished him up so's there wasn't nothin' left but his body with a couple er holes in it.

"His widow kept on at this ranch. Some right feller helped her sell the cattle that was left; she couldn't handle 'em, 'cept a couple er cows. Don't believe she'd er stayed it out overlong, but this is what happened:

"That blamed Sittin' Breeches sort er became the man o' the family. I aint lyin'; he'd get mad an' chatter an' suck his breath through his teeth at any stranger; he loved her an' the little girl, an' he kept 'em cheered up. He'd just sit fer hours watchin' 'em an' talkin' back at 'em when they'd say somethin' ter him. But one thing he wouldn't do under no conditions. He'd never go within hailin' distance o' that bunch o' mesquite that he jumped inter the day o' his arrival. But now you tell me if he don't deserve ter be remembered!

"One day, about a year after he'd come here, after the husband was dead an' she was undecided what ter do, the little girl unhitched him an' started wanderin' around, foolin' with him. Sounds like a lie, but it's gospel. The youngster made fer that bush an' he pulled back. Guess she thought she'd get in the shade of it, crawl in an' play house or somethin'. And there under the edge of it lay an old son-of-a-gun of a rattler, one o' them side-winders—you've seen 'em, pretty near the color o' the sand and all.

"Well, she didn't see it, but Sittin' Breeches he did, or else he just knew it without seein' it, an' he set up a chatterin' that come mighty nigh bein' a yell. Then the girl, who was almost onter the old devil, seen him an' somehow she got too scared to move. How do I know it? 'Cause the yellin' of Sittin' Breeches brought her mother ter the door an' she seen it all afore she could get to 'em. An' that there monkey, 'spite o' his everlastin' natural instinct o' fear fer a snake, he acted like he was tryin' to attract its attention onter himself. He'd jump in close an' holler like at it, an' ter all intent and purpose, he'd strike at it. On the third or fourth jump he got too close up an' the rattler landed on him an' held on. By then her mother got to her an' snatched her back, an' she killed the snake, but it was too late to do Sittin' Breeches any good.

"He was sort o' curled up on the sand, groanin' a little in the low voice them monkeys use when they croon like a little old woman. She stooped over him an' at the same time took a look along under the bush, thinkin' o' more snakes, I guess. An' there, hangin' on the same old stub where Sittin' Breeches left it in his hurry a year before, was that chain an' locket. Fact! She reached in an' got it, an' carried Sittin' Breeches inter the house.

"She laid him on the bed, but 'twasn't no use. She sat side o' him an' cried some and then she took that locket an' begun lookin' it over. Sittin' Breeches, he watched her, an' 'spite of the pain an' the time since he'd seen it, he must have begun to savvy it all over again, fer he reached fer the locket, she leanin' over him, an' took it. She give it him ter humor him, I guess, an' he kept it till he died 'bout an hour later on.

"Well, she buried him decent, as he deserved, an' then she opened up that locket. When she seen the name an' address—the place where it come from—an' when she remembered it all: the name o' the place where Sittin' Breeches' travelin' crate come from, how her little girl had asked fer a monkey, the way he had lit inter that mesquite bush an' out

again on arrival—she put this an' that tergether till she had it all savvied out.

"Now, I'm goin' ter quit this story right here, an' I'm goin' ter quit lyin', if it *is* lyin'. Might as well tell yer—my memories have got me—she sent for me.

"Yes, I was him an' I'd done pretty well down south there, but, you bet, when I got her letter I come a-runnin'."

"Now, look here," I said, "you know I've lived in this state some time. I've come to know fairly well where a 'California story' got its reputation. You don't expect me to believe this yarn, do you?"

For answer my companion made as if to reach into his old shirt front. Then, withdrawing his hand, he shook his head slowly and said: "Thought fer a minute I had that locket on me, but she's got it down ter Los Angeles."

"Who's got it?" I asked, thinking I had him in a corner.

"She's got it, the little girl Sittin' Breeches saved. After I come back she lived with us till her mother died—too soon. Her mother always wore it, but when she went, I give it to her. I've always felt 's if she was our girl, anyhow."

Slowly he rose, and beckoning me to follow him, led the way past the old broken-walled reservoir.

Then he stopped, looked about him, tilted his felt hat over one ear while he scratched behind the other and took the lay of the land. Presently he seemed settled in his mind for he walked slowly straight east for a couple of rods to the stump of an old blue-gum.

Just beyond, he stooped and scraping the dead leaves and sand and twigs to either side, laid bare a stone slab perhaps eighteen inches square.

I leaned over his bent shoulder and read, carved roughly in the stone:

To the
Memory
of
Sittin' Breeches—
who ought to
have been
a man.



"Dad says he guesses I can worry along till my regular allowance"

Crushed Peaches

BY RALPH BERGENGREN

Author of "Princess Natasha," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY C. F. PETERS

THE stairs were dark and narrow that led to the studio flat that Myra Gresham shared with Carol Wright in Paris, and as Myra slowly climbed them she thought of the difference between herself and her room-mate. To her this studio life was, after all, not much more than a lark. She pursued painting for the fun of it, with a wealthy father in New York to pay the bills and a place in society waiting for her when she tired of paint brushes. But with Carol the case was different. What money she had came laboriously from teaching, and her whole future depended upon her music. The sound of

her rich young voice, mounting and descending a ladder of notes, penetrated into the hallway now, and Myra paused a moment, angrily crumpling a bit of yellow paper in her gloved fingers. Then she pushed the door open and shook her head solemnly at the expression of hope that made her chum's big brown eyes suggest the proverbial saucers.

"Nothing doing, dearie," said Myra indignantly. She tossed the crumpled yellow paper on the piano and handed Carol a square, white envelope.

"A cable for me, and a letter for you. Dad says he guesses I can worry along till my regular allowance. Of course I

couldn't explain by cable that I needed an advance to help the nicest girl in the world go down to Normandy and show the swells how well she can sing. I *am* disgusted." She took off her wraps with an air that emphasized it.

Carol Wright made no immediate answer. She couldn't. She opened her own letter and turned to the light to read it, but her mind was a despairing blank at this failure of her last hope to obtain the money necessary to accept the important engagement that her singing teacher had recently secured for her. Opportunities to sing at house parties in Normandy *chateaux* grow on few bushes—and there are railway fares, and dresses and other minor details necessary before a young and unknown singer may pluck them. And so the chance of making an advantageous first appearance must again be put off indefinitely. She winked the tears out of her eyes and compelled her mind to fix itself on the letter. Presently her nose wrinkled between scorn and amusement and she handed the sheet to her room-mate.

"From Tessie Sutpen!" she exclaimed indignantly. "More errands! And yet just think of her expression if I should ask her to lend me a dollar!"

"And yet you'll keep on doing the errands," said Myra. "That's the inconvenience of being so good-natured."

For Tessie Sutpen, cousin though she was and wealthy widow into the bargain, had a parsimonious streak in her that made her a rather useless kind of relative—at times. She was better at asking favors than at giving them. And despite their disappointment, the two girls, their heads together, re-read the epistle and squeezed each other's hands as they giggled over it.

Dear Carol:—

I had hardly left Paris the other day when I became more and more certain, morally, that I had made a mistake in not buying that hat we looked at in Dauvenet's. Really, my dear girl, I'm afraid you'll think me fickle, but I'm perfectly reasonable when I stop to think afterwards. You see, that day I couldn't quite make up my mind because, being a young widow, it's such a delicate point mak-

ing the drop from second mourning to colors. One cannot flop directly from grey and lavender to magenta. I'd feel as if Charlie saw me doing it. But that hat was perfect—all but the ribbon. Dauvenet didn't call the ribbon magenta. She called it "crushed peaches," but I'm sure crushed peaches would make a kind of magenta. Anyway, I've decided to take the hat if Dauvenet will put quieter ribbon on it—not crushed peaches. And I'd be awfully obliged if you'd buy it with the money enclosed and send it down here. You see I want *your* taste, not Dauvenet's, in picking out the new ribbon.

It's a love of a place here, scenery and society both, and some day I hope to have you to visit. Did you ever hear of Lawrence Wood—not scenery, but the son of Sir Mortimer Paget Wood? He has a place right next to us and we see a lot of him. Elinor Simms says she heard last spring in London that Sir Mortimer is positively on his last legs and Lawrence Wood sure to be Sir Lawrence before long. Of course it is ridiculous, but there is *something fetching* about a title, now isn't there?

Well, so long. I hate to trouble you about the hat, of course, and if I had your gift for making hats—

Myra stopped reading. The same thought had occurred to both girls at the same moment. They looked at each other like conspirators.

"Tessie has her eye on a title," said Carol sarcastically. "She wants that hat to captivate the future *Sir* Lawrence. Have you got an old Dauvenet hat-box and label, Myra?"

"I have," said Myra.

"I can make a hat so much like that one at Dauvenet's that an angel couldn't tell the difference," continued Carol firmly. "And I'm going to do it. It will be just as good a hat—and I need the money more than Dauvenet."

Two weeks later Carol Wright came back from Normandy. She had had a busy morning for she had cashed the check which she had received for her professional services, put aside the share of it that she immediately needed, and mailed the rest to her mother in America. Carol had a way of arguing that other people needed money more than she *did*,

which, in this case, was almost true enough to justify the feeling. Normandy had approved her singing. There were possibilities of other engagements. And now she hummed gaily to herself as she turned the corner and came within sight of the familiar front door that led to her own studio. At the same moment a large, red motor stopped at the curb in front of the doorway and the young man driving it looked up and down the street carelessly. Then, when he saw Carol, he felt in his pocket until he found a bit of pasteboard. Whether or not Carol had seen him there was no way of saying, for she now stood before the door feeling in her pocket for her latch-key. The young man looked at the pasteboard, and again at the girl in the doorway. Then he scrambled out of the car, dived head and shoulders into the back part of it, and reappeared with an enormous hat-box. Carrying this contraption carefully, he crossed the sidewalk.

"I beg your pardon if I am mistaken," he said, raising his cap with his unencumbered hand, "but are you not Miss Carol Wright?"

Carol turned quickly. Her brown eyes fell on the hat-box, and widened in that

almost childish way with which they invariably expressed sudden emotion. To the male observer one hat-box is very like

another—but this one Carol immediately recognized as the former property of Miss Myra Gresham.

"I am Carol Wright," she admitted, still staring at the hat-box. Of all things in the world it was the last that she was anxious to recognize.

"I," continued the young man, "am Lawrence Wood—Mrs. Suten's neighbor. And this," he added, lifting the box so that she could see it better, "is her hat. Inside, you know."

"Oh, yes, I know." Carol seemed to be speaking to herself and her tone puzzled him. It suggested some vague and yet terrible distress that the occasion did not seem to warrant.

"There's a note inside," he explained hastily. "I

—I cannot pretend to much knowledge of hats. My understanding was that I am to offer you my car and take you to a milliner who will do something or other to the hat. Something or other beyond my possible comprehension and therefore not to be explained to a milliner except by—Miss Carol Wright. You see it was all very sudden. I was just runnin' up to Paris in the car to meet my mother and



Carrying this contraption he crossed the sidewalk

sister, and just as I was startin' Mrs. Sutpen appeared suddenly with the hat. I was to find you—wait while you read the note—convey you to the milliner's—wait there while you tore open the box—"

"Did Mrs. Sutpen give you a photograph to identify me by?" interrupted Carol. A psychologist would have recognized the question as a case of double consciousness for she was really thinking more about the hat in the box than the young man who carried it.

"In case you were not at home," explained Mr. Wood. "Mrs. Sutpen thinks of everything. If you were not at home I was to drive to Monsieur de Vigny's music studio and watch his class comin' out."

Carol Wright turned the key in the lock and opened the door abruptly.

"If you will bring that *thing* up stairs," she said, "I will read Mrs. Sutpen's letter and see what she wants me to do with it. We can hardly open it on the sidewalk."

She led the way up the four, dark flights to the studio. Myra was out and Carol's companion breathed a sigh of relief as he placed the hat-box on top of the piano. "Makes a chap feel more and more like a messenger boy," he remarked cheerfully, and stood watching her as she opened the box, lifted the hat, and found the letter that had been gradually shaken to the bottom. Carol read the letter and tapped her foot nervously.

"She's coming to-morrow," she said finally—and again Mr. Wood wondered that she was taking an apparently trivial errand so seriously. "She wants Dauve-



"Take me to Dauvenet's," she said briefly

net to put—back—the—crushed—peaches. 'She thinks it will be nice if I attend to it myself and have the hat here, ready for her, before noon to-morrow.' She slapped the hat back into the box with a recklessness that would have made any woman shudder, tied the strings in a savage bow-knot, and motioned the future Sir Lawrence Wood to resume his burden. There was nothing for it but to square Dauvenet—somehow—and make up for it afterward by painful economies. Perhaps she could offer some kind of an exchange to the famous milliner—if the famous milliner happened to be good-natured.

"Take me to Dauvenet's," she said, briefly, when they reached the sidewalk; "Dauvenet's, Rue de la Paix."

The big red motor pierced its way through the stream of traffic, and now and again Lawrence Wood looked out of the corner of his eye at this curiously distressed young woman sitting beside him. He was a well-behaved young man, and, as Carol sat looking straight ahead and was evidently little inclined for conversation, he kept his thoughts to himself. He would have liked to ask what the dickens was the matter. But he liked her profile—the combination of nice child and independent young woman in her delicate features as she stared seriously ahead of her as if her own desire could make the car go faster. Once a stray lock of brown hair fell over her forehead, and she brushed it back with a gesture of impatience. If passengers should not talk to motormen, neither is it safe for motormen to gaze too steadily and admiringly at passengers, but the big car nevertheless reached its destination without fatalities.

"Thank you," said Carol, speaking for the first time since they started. Before he could help her she had grabbed the hat-box vindictively and borne it presumably into Dauvenet's very presence. But before the box could possibly have been opened and the contents examined, he saw them, girl and box, hurrying back to the motor. She pitched the box recklessly into the car and was again beside him.

"It's gone," exclaimed Carol breathlessly.

"Gone?" echoed Lawrence Wood.

"The crushed peaches ribbon," explained Carol. "Somebody has bought the hat with the ribbon on it. Dauvenet hasn't any more like it. Perhaps there isn't any more like it. It was some kind of a mistake in manufacture and that made it exclusive. I've got to find out if there is any more of it. Take me to the Louvre, Mr. Wood."

"The picture gallery?" asked the young man doubtfully.

"No, the shop. Quick!"

It was now nearly noon. The traffic was denser, and, whatever the temptation, Lawrence Wood had no opportunity to look at his companion. It was Carol's turn to look out of the corners of her eyes. He had a square, clean-cut, honest face, she told herself. Nobody could help liking him—but what would he think of her if he knew her errand? Well, it made very little difference. He would soon enough know, if she failed to find any crushed-peaches ribbon, for now there was no escape except by finding the ribbon and putting it on the hat herself. With the ribbon gone, Dauvenet could be of no assistance. Nobody could be of any assistance. And Carol, in her imagination, could hear Tessie Sutpen telling the story to Lawrence Wood as a fine joke on her poor cousin. Of course, there was no reason why Carol Wright should care what he thought of her. But, although she told herself that she didn't, she knew that she was simply trying to make the best of a bad situation. And she was really too honest to keep up the deception. She *did* care—and now Tessie Sutpen had spoiled all the pleasure that she had felt that morning at her success in Normandy. The car stopped in front of the Louvre, and, even as he turned toward her, Carol was out and lugging the hat-box into the big shop. There was really no need of taking the awful thing with her, but she had a horrible feeling that she and the hat-box were now forever and inseparably joined. She imagined herself singing in a concert with the hat-box on the piano beside her.

Lawrence Wood watched the passing crowd idly. Secretly he hoped that the Louvre would contain no crushed peaches—and then, on their way to the next establishment, perhaps something would happen to let him into the mystery. It couldn't be very serious, and yet how seriously his companion was taking it! There was something truly wonderful in the attitude of a woman toward a hat. He wouldn't have believed it. Imagine a man taking a hat in the same spirit! And if a man did take his hat, or anybody else's hat, in such a serious fashion, imagine what an opinion you would have of him! Yet here was a girl doing the same thing—and the more she did it the more you admired her. Lawrence Wood accepted the fact, although he marveled at it.

"To the Bon Marché," said the brief, but now delightfully familiar voice. Carol and the box were

again beside him and his wish had been realized. Evidently there had been no crushed peaches. He started the machine slowly—and just as he did so, felt a quick tug at his elbow.

"Stop!" cried Carol. "There's the woman who bought the hat! Let me out!"

Lawrence Wood turned and looked toward the doorway. He saw nothing that to his masculine mind suggested crushed peaches, but he did see a large, comfortable-looking woman just coming



He saw girl and box hurrying back to the motor

out of the Louvre. Their eyes met, crossing the heads of a moving procession of intervening pedestrians, and she smiled cheerfully and waved a well-gloved hand at him. The sight seemed to electrify the future peer of England into sudden activity. His face became absent-minded, the expression of one who sees an acquaintance and yet fails to recognize the well-known features. He continued the movement which he had momentarily suspended. The motor car shot away from the curb with a careless

toot that was none the less prompt and decisive. And it had all happened in about two seconds.

"She's got the hat on!" repeated Carol excitedly. "I *must* speak to her. She looks good-natured enough to—" The car was already rounding the corner. "I must speak to that woman," repeated Carol, "the one who was waving to somebody. She's got the hat on! If you don't stop I'll jump out!"

Lawrence Wood stopped.

"We'll go back," he said. "I didn't realize which woman you meant. But I'm afraid we won't catch her. She's very spry on her feet for a woman of her age. I didn't know which one you meant or I'd have stopped and introduced you."

"Introduced me!" cried Carol. "You know that woman! I—I believe you were running away from her."

"Only temporarily," smiled Mr. Wood. "You see, she'd have insisted upon taking us to lunch. She's my mother—"

"Your mother!" Carol's mind took in possibilities that had not even distantly occurred to her companion. "Oh, what will she think of me!"

They were back now in front of the Bon Marché. The woman of the hat had vanished. The car picked its way slowly through the crowded street, and Lawrence Wood spoke gravely, with his eyes on another motor directly in front of them.

"I hadn't thought of that, Miss Wright," he said humbly. "Believe me, I hadn't. I'll tell the truth. I didn't want to stop our shoppin' expedition. There didn't seem to be much time for conversation. You can't go shoppin' and lunch with your family at the same time, you know."

"She can't think much worse of me than I think of myself," said Carol bitterly. The fruitless search for crushed peaches was beginning to prove too much for her.

"Nonsense!" said Mr. Wood. "If you can't get Mrs. Sutpen's smashed tomatoes, why, you can't—and why isn't that the end of it?"

"Because it won't be the end of it," groaned Carol. She turned defiantly, her eyes shining. "Don't you see? She'll go to Dauvenet's herself to make sure. She always thinks that she can do things that somebody else has failed in. And she'll find out that Dauvenet didn't sell her that hat in the first place. I made it myself, Mr. Wood." Carol had reached the end of her endurance. It had to come out sooner or later—and the sooner the better. "I needed the money. I had a chance to sing in public and I needed the money to pay my expenses. You've seen—you know by the way Tessie has acted about the hat—that it was so much like Dauvenet's that she couldn't tell the difference. I've done work for milliners myself. And when Tessie sent me the money to buy that hat at Dauvenet's—I made her the very twin to it and kept the money myself. Sent it to her in one of Myra's old Dauvenet boxes—"

"If I were Mrs. Sutpen," said Lawrence Wood gravely, "I'd rather have it than a dozen Dauvenets. Anybody can have a Dauvenet. My own mother—" He stopped and remained thoughtful for a moment. "I say, you know, how'd it do if I got my mother to give up the smashed tomatoes?"

It was about ten o'clock the next morning when the big red motor again panted outside Carol Wright's door and Mr. Wood again stood in the studio. He had just set down another Dauvenet hat-box and there was an air of triumph about him that cheered Carol wonderfully as she came to meet him.

"The hat! the hat!" she cried joyfully. "What a mother! You don't mean to say that she actually surrendered a brand-new hat!"

"Not exactly," said the future peer of England. "It required diplomacy. You only wanted the ribbon, didn't you?" he added with a touch of anxiety as he opened the hat-box and extracted the contents.

Once, unquestionably, this mangled thing that he removed from the hat-box had been a hat. Now it was a tragedy, a mangled ruin, a sight to weep over.

"But for heaven's sake what happened to it?" exclaimed Carol. "Has it been in an accident?"

"I," said Mr. Wood proudly, "was the accident. Under the circumstances I thought it best not to confide to my parent exactly why I desired her hat ribbon. It seemed better not to. I just happened to put the hat on a chair—and then I just happened to sit down on it.

"I wish there was anything else I could do to show you how grateful I really am."

"There is a certain photograph," said Mr. Wood. "I'd like to keep it. I'd like to start my acquaintance with the original on that basis."

Carol made no immediate answer. She was transferring the ribbon. A new hat, wonderful with crushed peaches, grew under her deft fingers. Then, far down



Mr Wood had just set down another Dauvenet hat-box

Absent-mindedly, of course. Mother was disturbed, but not fatally. She gave it to the maid—and I bought it for four francs. I suppose that is what you might call a bargain."

Carol was already removing the ribbon. She looked up gratefully, though her eyes were bright with laughter.

"You must let me repay you the four francs, Mr. Wood," she said seriously.

in the hall, they heard the ring of a doorbell. Their eyes met, and they nodded at each other comprehendingly like old friends and comrades.

"I think you may keep it—during good behavior," said Carol. "And now, please throw this wreck of your mother's into the next room. Tessie's foot is on the stair—but her crushed peaches are ready for her."

The Quarry

Solid Ivory Retires With Honor

BY JOHN A. MOROSO

Author of the "Solid Ivory" stories

ILLUSTRATED BY ROBERT EDWARDS

TIERNEY," began the inspector in charge of the Central Office, "here is a case that seems a dead one, but I don't want to get out of the Department before it is cleaned up."

Tierney, the accepted bonehead of all the "bulls" under McCafferty, shifted his weight to his big left foot.

"Yuh," he grunted, stupidly.

"The rest of the boys have called you 'Solid Ivory' long enough," resumed the inspector. "I know it doesn't worry you any, old man."

"Thanks."

"But you've never fallen down on a job and I believe that all this bonehead business is a part of your game."

Tierney grinned.

"You'll be the inspector in charge of Central Office some day."

Tierney blushed violently and his face showed the red glow of a sunset over the bay of Naples.

"Not a chance in the world, boss," he said.

McCafferty pulled at his gray mustache as he pondered the subject he had in mind. There had been a change of administration and the inspector was through, having squared his life's work by honest, fair and moral conduct when he might have come upon his gray years by dishonesty, with wealth and ease. The new administration didn't want his kind.

This first-grade lieutenant before him had been the jest of the other men, but he had always made good and he was always on the level. McCafferty, seeing his own finish before him—his probable relegation to a remote police district—

wanted Tierney to go up the line as far as he could and as far as he deserved.

"I have a case for you which, if you solve it, will prove you to be the best plain-clothes man that ever worked in New York," the inspector resumed. "I have had many men tackle it and each of them has failed. It is the Iowa Mike case—have you heard of it?"

"Yes, Chief."

"It has been twelve years since he was in this office before me," said McCafferty. "He got bail and jumped it."

"Yes, sir."

"No one has laid eyes on him since."

Tierney was perspiring. The best men in the department had tried to locate Iowa Mike, as able a yegg as ever cracked a safe.

"Sit down," commanded the inspector.

Tierney sat on the edge of a chair near his chief's desk.

"I gotcha, Chief," he said huskily, to show that he was interested.

"Of course," resumed the inspector, "we don't know that he has turned any trick during these past years and he may be living right. But the policy of the police system is to keep in touch with old crooks able enough to pull off a bank robbery in case they should slide back into old habits; see?"

"I see, boss."

"As far as we know, Iowa Mike did only the one job. We got him in here after that. He was an expert mechanic. He broke down and told me that his mother was hungry and that his father was dead. He was nothing more than a boy. He might have been stringing me,

but somehow I felt sorry for him and when the bail was put at \$5,000 I didn't kick. He jumped the bail. We have his picture, measurements and finger prints. Get him—if you can."

Tierney pulled his big frame from the chair and made a grotesque attempt at standing at attention.

"There are no big cases on just now," the inspector told him. "Just use your time and wits to locate this man and if you can get him bring him in. A man as expert as he is with locks and combinations is better inside a jail than out. He may not have the criminal instinct and his story to me may have been true, but he has the skill for bank breaking and it is our job to watch such gentlemen."

"All right, Chief," Tierney responded. "I'll look him up in the gallery first and find out who his pals were on the job."

"That's the way to go at it," the inspector said encouragingly.

Tierney ducked his head, made a shameful excuse for a salute and left the office.

The inspector pressed a pearl button.

Lieutenant Jimmy Dunn, in charge of the desk, popped in, ruddy of face and smiling.

"Yes, sir," said Jimmy.

"I've given Tierney the old Iowa Mike case," said the inspector. "Let him have all the time he wants and shove him any expense money he asks for."

"Yes, Chief."

McCafferty paused and a smile flickered for a moment at his lips.

"How many men have tried to find Mike?" he asked.

"There was Dorgan, sir; Reilley, Bill Watson, 'Sherlock' Harry Johnson and about three others, sir."

"I may be shifted before long, Jimmy," the inspector said, "so look out for Tierney. If any man can find Iowa Mike that man is Tierney. He is a bloodhound. He never stops until his quarry is at bay."

II

Tierney went to the office of Faurot, in charge of the Bertillon system, and

there secured an identification slip of the man he wanted, copies of his photograph in full-face and profile, and finally the one thing a crook dreads most, the finger prints.

The little circling web of lines in black and white never lie. In all the millions of people of the earth no two have the same finger marks. It is as if the Maker separately ticketed and tabbed each one of His children as he came into the world.

Faurot handed Tierney a small magnifying glass. To his own right eye he placed another.

"See here, Tierney," said the Bertillon man. "This will put you wise."

Faurot, with the tip of a pencil, pointed out a little lake-like formation in the circles of the right thumb.

"That is very distinct," he said. "You will see this readily. Then on the left thumb you will find a break in the fourth circle from the rim. See?"

Tierney saw, and in his brain these guide posts to the identity of Iowa Mike were photographed.

He thanked Faurot, returned to Jimmy Dunn for some expense money and ambled out of headquarters to start to his little flat down on the East Side where his old mother would be spreading the table in the kitchen for him.

Two long rings and two short ones at the door-bell were his signal to her that it was her James asking admittance and not some flat-house thief making a test to see if the apartment was empty.

"Clicketty-clicketty-clicketty," went the lock as the old mother pressed the button in the kitchen, upstairs.

She kissed him as he entered, went to the window, drew in a bottle of beer, opened it for him and brought him a chair near the stove.

Winter was approaching and the first flurry of snow was dancing prettily against the window panes. The clean kitchen, with its bright pans, spotless floor, the hissing of the kettle on the fire and the bustling little woman made the heart of home for the plain-clothes man. He patted his mother affectionately on her hand as she put his beer before him.

"It's a darlin' old lady the Lord gave me," he said.

"Sure an' ye're a flatterer," she replied with a little laugh of pleasure.

Tierney lapsed into profound silence broken only by the gurgle of the beer as he drank from the neck of the bottle.

"An' what's the job me famous son is tacklin' to-day?" asked the mother.

Tierney grunted as if in disgust.

"I've got to find Michael Francis Montgomery, mother," he replied. "It's a good name, Montgomery. Somehow I don't like the job."

"What's he done—murther?"

"Naw."

"Trimmed the daypositors in a savings bank?"

"Not exactly, mother; I guess he trimmed the directors."

"I'm glad of that."

"He broke a safe; the gentleman's name among his friends is Iowa Mike."

"Oho, a yegg."

"Yes'm."

"Be careful, me lamb; they're a dangerous boonch."

"No danger here," Tierney assured her with a chuckle. "Nobody can find him. They've been hunting for ten years. He jumped his bail. The chief wants me to locate him and bring him in. Everybody else has failed. I'm the goat this time."

"Is he disprit?"

"The chief said he was nothing more than a boy ten years ago," Tierney replied. "He came from Iowa to New York looking for work. He had to hobo it and fell in with a gang of safe breakers. He said his old mother was starving and as he was a good mechanic the gang took him in. So he took the offer to drill the safe—the bank up in Westchester."

"His mother starving?" exclaimed Mrs. Tierney. "The poor lad! I'm glad he got away."

"He may have reformed and started out right with a stomach full of food," mused the son. "He may be a man of family and well to do now. But our job is to keep track of him and make him serve his time for that one piece of work, never mind how good a man he

may be now. If he turns out to be on the level all these years it might help him get a light sentence or even a suspended sentence, but it would knock his good reputation to the ceiling."

"Oh, lad, that would be terrible!" the old lady cried as she placed before him a bowl of redolent Irish stew.

"Yes'm," replied the son, "but me duty is me duty. I gotta get Mr. Montgomery and bring him before the chief."

Tierney gave his attention to the stew, putting his empty beer bottle on the floor beside his chair.

"When do you start work, Jim?" the mother asked.

"To-night," he replied. "There's a stool living at No. 9 Bowery who knew something about that job. He helped the bulls land Mr. Montgomery. I'll go and talk with him."

The afternoon wore on, with Tierney comfortably smoking a pipe in the kitchen and the mother retailing the gossip of the parish.

The flurry of snow settled into a steady fall. It lined the window ledge as if with white velvet and the clotheslines stretching over the rear court of the tenement were covered with it.

Mrs. Tierney lighted the lamp and brought her boy's rubber shoes. She took his overcoat and held it before the stove to warm the inside for her "lamb."

The plain-clothes man pulled himself from his warm corner, slipped billy and pistol into his pockets, got into his rubbers and overcoat and kissed his mother good-night.

"Mind ye, boy," she warned, "if ye find Mr. Montgomery, living right or wrong, he'll put up a fight anyhow, after beating out the police for ten years."

III

The trailing arbutus was showing on the underhills of the Blue Ridge in South Carolina when a worn and tired young man slipped from the top of a box-car as a freight train pulled into the town of Greenville.

The cold of winter still hung on although the snows on the hills had melted. Touches of green were enlivening the little valleys.

The Carolinians are a kindly people. When the young man asked for a chance to work, the first person he approached gave him bread and meat and a drink of "mountain dew," a liquor drawn from the kernel of the corn, powerful, warming, galvanic.

Michael Francis Montgomery, running from the human bloodhounds of the New York police system, a youth with a mistake to undo even though the mistake was that he had robbed to send money to a decrepit and hopeless and starving mother, stopped here to breathe.

It was a remote corner of the world, and about the town reared the tall chimneys of many mills. Each mill had great masses of machinery. He was a mechanic and expert.

Lying stiff with cold on the top of a box-car, these surrounding mills had caught his attention. In one of them, he felt sure, he would be able to get a job. He was no man to steal for the fun of it and no man to steal because of moral obliquity. He had turned thief in the last ditch into which faulty industrial conditions had forced him. In that ditch had staggered not only himself but his mother.

The man who gave him food and drink was a superintendent in one of these great cotton mills. There was a chance for the wayfarer.

Montgomery gave the name of John Nelson, went to board with Superintendent Legare and was soon installed in the machinery shop of the mill.

His poor mother had given up the struggle and had died in Iowa of despair and a broken heart when she got the news of her son's arrest. The money stolen from the bank in Westchester had been carried off by the gang he had run into while tramping east to seek work. He had received not a cent of it but the yeggs had stuck by him to the extent of having bail provided him.

John Nelson was alone in the world

and starting out, at 23 years of age, to live down a mistake and, if possible, beat out the finest and most inexorable police system in the world. In the big gray building in Mulberry street was that one dreadful and sure record that would never change—his finger prints.

The young man's mother had reared him, through all the years of poverty, with a sense of duty to his God. There was faith in him, and he turned to his Church in this remote town nestling among the high hills, with the faint blue mountains in the distance seeming to wall him in from the rest of the world.

A year of right living and industrious work brought Nelson advancement. He was put in charge of the machine shops and with more leisure at his command he began perfecting details of cotton-mill machinery. At the end of the second year he turned out a device which meant the saving of thousands of dollars each year in waste to the manufacturers. It was patented and the president of his mill put it into operation. At the end of the third year John Nelson was a wealthy man, his royalties from his invention bringing him in \$10,000 a year.

In the fullness of his young manhood Nelson, instead of having his head turned by success, became grave and serious. He looked ten years older than he was and already strands of gray were coming into his black hair. Unlike other well-to-do young men he never journeyed abroad. No city near or far seemed to have any attraction for him.

He bought stock in the mill and became one of its directors. The quiet, even-minded men who operated the big mill were to his liking. They grew to admire his ability as he admired their business capacity. In time he decided to build a home of his own among them.

It was not long before the people of Greenville county began to speak of him as "The Hermit" and this name became fixed when his house began to show its frame on Glassy Mountain to the west of Greenville, a mountain almost abandoned, heavily wooded and

cut with crevasses deep and dangerous.

The men who built the house told strange things about it in their gossip. It had many doors, indeed more doors than windows, and each window was in fact a door, after the French design, reaching from floor to ceiling.

On the top floor was a gymnasium, and on one side was a rack filled with great iron weights. Trapezes and horizontal bars were put up. The two servants kept by John Nelson were never allowed on this floor.

In his library was a safe of chilled steel. Rumor had it that the master of the house always kept an abundance of cash near him.

The roads up Glassy Mountain were impassable to automobiles, but a sure footed horse with a skillful rider could make speed over them when horse and master had learned the way and knew the going.

Nelson had the fleetest thoroughbred that could be brought from Kentucky and, riding up and down the mountain every day, he and his steed could have dashed over the wild course at night at full speed, so used did they become to the trail.

"Nelson's Castle," the mountain folk called his house. Little did they know that the top floor was a torture chamber where the serious young man daily suspended himself from horizontal bars, with great iron weights attached to his feet, thus slowly and agonizingly to increase his height and the length of his arms, so that at least one page of the police record might be blotted out. In five years he had gained an inch and a half. The Greenville people noticed it and said that it was the mountain living that did it.

A man of success, well and honestly earned, with the respect of his fellows, his life marked by fair and honest actions, holding the love of his employees because of his humane treatment of them, John Nelson lived in his castle on Glassy Mountain prepared to throw a handful of money into a saddle-bag in a moment, spring through any one of the many doors, leap to the back of his

fleet horse and make a wild dash for freedom and another chance to live right when the bloodhounds of the law should come sniffing at his door.

He fought, and bitterly fought, against falling in love with Mary Legare, the daughter of his friend and first employer, for if disgrace came to him her heart would be broken. But he lost out in this fight, and so, one day, he took to his castle his young and beautiful wife. With every day of happiness more gray hairs appeared, for his anxiety increased.

The twelfth year after his flight from New York found John Nelson rich, with a devoted wife and three lovely children.

The golden sprays of jasmine flashed through the boughs of the heavily leaved trees in the forests near his home. The glorious sun of an early mountain summer flooded every room. The father and husband kissed his wife and his children good-by as he started down the mountain on his thoroughbred. The little group stood in the sunlight at a front window and waved their hands to him.

And it so chanced that as Nelson started down the mountain, a stranger in a dilapidated buggy drawn by two mules, started up.

IV

Nelson's pet business care at this stage of his career was a knitting mill he had added to the big plant of which he was now managing director. The plant was newly started, the machinery all bright and spick and span from the manufacturers and the young women employees of the countryside were all eager to learn the new work offered them.

The whole community had prospered with John Nelson. He had carried with him many a family to comfort and independence where before they had staggered along in bitter poverty and idleness. By consideration for his workers and by investing his wealth so as to give employment to every pair



"See here, Tierney," said the Bertillon man. "This will put you wise"

of willing hands in the county he had brought benison to a land and a people.

So, with the new plant he hoped to spread his influence for good and add a hundred or more wage earners to the community.

In the knitting mill he talked with the forewoman to learn just what progress the beginners were making, cautioning her, as he did daily, to make the careless young women realize the danger of the many sharp needles that flashed ceaselessly before them as they fed the cotton to the machines.

One dark-eyed girl sitting at a machine had her hair in two great black braids hanging down her back.

"That is dangerous, Miss Dawson," Nelson warned the forewoman.

"She is a very careful girl," replied Miss Dawson, "and her hair is so heavy that when she wears it wrapped about her head it causes her to suffer from headache."

Nelson passed among the workers, smiling a good-morning to each, and then returned to his private office.

"Mrs. Nelson has been calling on the telephone, sir," said his secretary.

Nelson picked up the receiver on his desk and called for his wife on the

direct wire he had installed between home and office.

"Yes, dear," he said as he recognized the answering voice. "You say a stranger called? Did he give his name? No? What did he look like?"

Nelson's face paled as he heard the description of the man.

He even thought he caught a quiver of anxiety in his wife's voice.

"Don't worry," he assured her. "It is some engineer or millman seeking work. I will let you know all about it at dinner time. He should be down here in a half-hour."

He rang off and turned to his secretary.

"Mr. Adams," he said, "I will not answer my correspondence until later. You may have the next two hours off. Oh, by the way, see that my horse is saddled and ready at the south door. I may take a canter. Things are quiet and the fresh air will do us both good."

Adams left the room.

Nelson sprang to the door and turned the key.

For five minutes he paced the carpeted floor, twisting his fingers behind his back, his head bowed on his chest, the furrows deep on his brow.

Once he stopped at his private safe, opened it and took out an envelope containing ten thousand dollars in cash. He put this in his inside coat pocket and from a drawer in the safe removed a heavy automatic revolver.

His face became distorted as he tried to hold back the tears that forced their way to his eyes. He was thinking of the little children and the loving, beautiful mother of them who would be left to stand the shame.

He replaced the revolver in the drawer, took the money from his pocket and put it back in the safe.

He went to an open window and gazed out toward the mountains. Far off he could just make out the stone chimneys of his home.

Suddenly full courage came to him. He brought his right fist down into the palm of his left hand.

"By Heaven, I'll stick it through!" he muttered.

That resolution firm in his mind and heart he unlocked the door, threw it open and took his seat at his desk.

The office porter entered.

"There's a man wants to see you, sir," he announced. "He wont give his name."

"Send him in," replied Nelson.

James Tierney, dusty with travel, hat in hand, entered the office.

"Have a seat, if you please," Nelson said.

Tierney sat down without a word. His keen little eyes were studying every line in the countenance of the man before him. Suddenly he looked Nelson square in the eyes, with that trick of the detective meant to disconcert the man under suspicion.

Nelson's eyes met his squarely. The rich man's heart was beating like a trip-hammer but his face was a mask.

"What can I do for you, sir?" he asked in even tones.

"Mr. Montgomery," began Tierney.

"I am Mr. Nelson."

Cautiously Tierney abandoned this line of attack.

"Beg your pardon, Mr. Nelson," he said, "but I am looking for Michael

Montgomery, who came here ten years ago, got a place in one of the mills as a mechanic and rapidly made a name and fortune for himself."

"I never heard of him," replied Nelson. "May I ask your name and your business?"

"I'm James Tierney, from the detective bureau, New York City," Tierney told him.

"You wish to arrest this man Montgomery?"

"Yes."

"What has he done?"

"He cracked a safe in Westchester county, New York, twelve years ago and jumped his bail."

"A safe-breaker is a dangerous man to have in a quiet community like this, but he may have reformed and may be living a good life."

"So he may," responded Tierney, "but the Department's system is to keep track of every man whose Bertillon records it has on file."

Nelson rose from his chair and paced the floor.

Tierney saw that he was taller and broader than the man whose description he had in his pocket. But the lines of the face were the same.

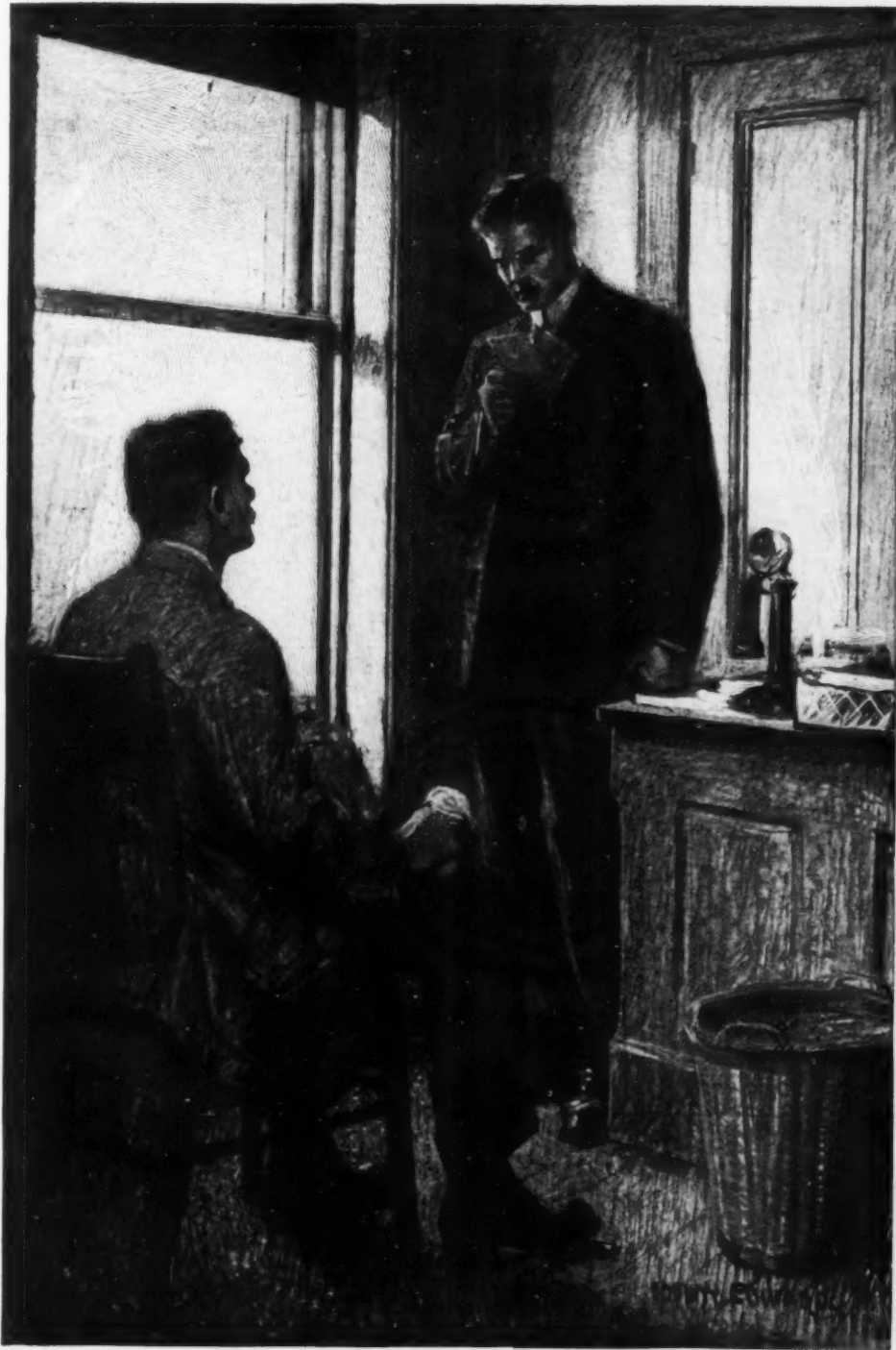
"I have a copy of his finger print records," resumed Tierney, "and any man who might be suspected of being 'Iowa Mike' Montgomery could easily prove that the police were mistaken by letting his own finger prints be taken and compared."

"Yes, I imagine that would be a sure way," Nelson assented. "But I know little of such matters. However, I will help you all that I can in finding the man although I hope that if he has reformed and is living an honest and happy life, no harm will come to him."

Tierney grunted uneasily, for he knew the man before him to be an honest and capable citizen of the little community he had invaded.

But duty was first, last and all the time his fetish. He suddenly fished out of his inside pocket the two photographs from the Rogues' Gallery.

"Here's his pictures," Tierney ex-



"He does not look like a crook," he said, in full command of himself again

claimed, holding the two prints before the eyes of his quarry.

Nelson's face paled and his hand trembled ever so slightly as he took the pictures and looked at them bravely.

"He does not look like a crook," he said, in full command of himself again. "Mr. Tierney, this is a picture of a youth, of some poor boy who, perhaps, made a mistake. He might have been driven to it during hard and bitter stress. Perhaps a mother or some one he loved more than himself may have caused him to make the sacrifice. Who can tell?"

Tierney mopped his brow. He felt that some insidious influence was undermining him and making him regret that he had been successful in the chase. Here before him was the man he had toiled night and day, for months, to locate. Others had toiled for years, vainly. Here was an accomplished task that meant a big feather in his cap, but the feather was not to his liking.

Nelson dropped the pictures on his desk.

"Before you go," he said to the detective, "I want you to see how we run a mill in Greenville. I am just starting a knitting branch and everything about it is new and bright, free of scars and fresh from the making."

Before Tierney could make an excuse to carry his questioning further he found himself following this masterful young man with iron-gray hair.

They proceeded to the knitting mill. The machines were whipping along rapidly, turning out the finished garments as the young women fed them the material. There were long rows of flashing needles, upper and nether files gnashing away at their work.

Nelson again saw the girl with the two long braids of hair. He forgot his own terrible predicament and started toward her to warn her.

She swung her head to one side to speak to the girl at the further end of the machine. One of the braids swept over her shoulder. The tip of it caught in a small cog beside the glistening, tireless double row of needles. A pierc-

ing scream rose above the hum of the machinery.

With a cry uttered at the top of his voice and with all the power of his lungs that the man in charge of the electric controller might hear and cut off the current, Nelson sprang to the side of the girl and caught the fastened braid of hair with both hands.

The cry of alarm had been heard and the power cut off but the needles still flashed and the cog beside them moved with diminishing speed. Nelson, with all his strength, tore the braid of hair free. The girl, overcome by fright, dropped on the floor beside him.

The needles still flashed, but slowly.

As if himself overcome Nelson staggered, spread out his hands and in one ghastly, terrible moment made his sacrifice. The hands fell between the needles and their sharp points tore through every finger, destroying instantly their record of circles, ovals and ellipses.

No cry escaped his lips. The agony was keen but what could be such agony compared to that which would come to his heart when the man from headquarters slipped a steel bracelet about his wrist?

Tierney was stricken momentarily dumb with horror, then his senses returning he rushed to the side of Nelson.

The machinery had stopped but the needle jaws had closed over the two hands.

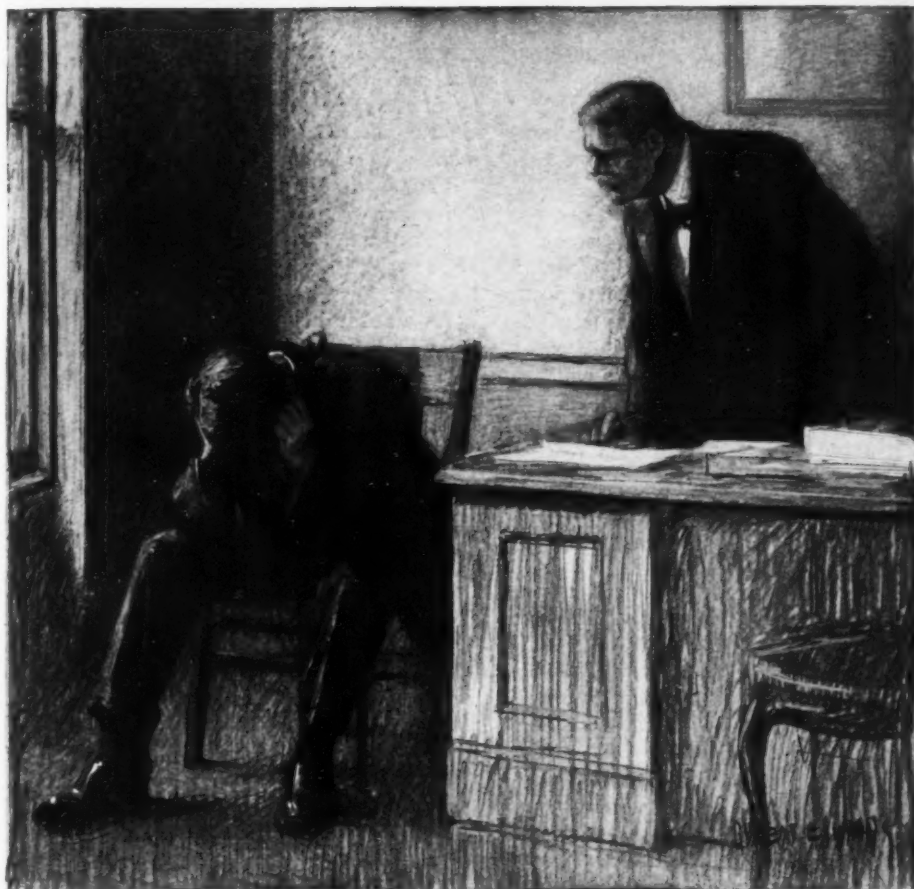
"Just move that iron rod to the right there," he heard Nelson direct. "Move it slowly, just an inch backward."

Tierney obeyed and the jaws opened.

Nelson's face was ashen-gray, but he did not faint. The mill physician was already in the room and the myriad little wounds were quickly cleansed and made aseptic.

"The bones of four fingers on the right hand and three on the left are broken," the physician said as he finished his bandaging. "They will be easily mended. In a month only the scars will be left."

In the confusion following the accident Tierney found his hat, took the



"I wanted to stop but you trained me, boss, never to let up"

pictures from the desk of Nelson and went out of the place. Down the road, where no one could see him, he tore the photographs into fine bits.

"This aint no job for Jim Tierney," he growled.

V

Inspector McCafferty was cleaning out his desk. The order for his transfer to a remote Flatbush district had not yet been issued by the mayor through the police commissioner but McCafferty knew that it would be forthcoming in the course of two or three days.

The scowl that had frightened many

a crooked detective lay heavily on his forehead and in his honest eyes. The politicians had demanded his head.

There was a tap at his door.

"Who is it? What do you want?" he growled angrily.

Tierney showed his face at a crack in the door.

McCafferty resumed his work of getting his personal correspondence together.

"Come in, Chief?" asked Tierney.

McCafferty nodded his head.

"I got him, Chief," began Tierney, "but I didn't bring him in."

"Why?" asked the inspector in a tone that showed his lack of interest.

"He's been on the level all these years," Tierney said haltingly in excuse. "Then when I tried to get his finger prints he stuck his hands in some machinery and—"

"What?"

"Yes, sir; he has a wife and little children and a good name and rather than—"

"Hell, man, do you mean to say you let him make that sacrifice?" demanded McCafferty, jumping from his chair.

"I didn't know he was going to do it, boss," Tierney replied in a choking voice. "Before God, I'd 'a' thrown down my job before I'd 'a' stood for that."

McCafferty, stirred to the roots of his heart, lost his temper. He banged his right fist into his hand, shot out his jaw as he faced Tierney and half screamed, "You bloodhound! You bloodhound!"

Tierney sat down in a chair by his chief's desk and covered his face with his big red paws.

"God, boss," he stammered as the tears came down his cheeks, "that man is the kind that would stand for crucifixion for those he loves."

"How did you trail him?"

"I went to his home town and found that his mother was dead," explained Tierney. "I looked up the cemetery and found that the keeper was paid every month for caring for the grave. I traced the checks and found the—son."

"Blessed Virgin!" exclaimed McCafferty. "Didn't you have sense enough to stop there?"

"I wanted to stop, boss," Tierney went on. "I wanted to stop but you trained me, boss, never to let up."

McCafferty shuddered.

The inspector went to a window and

there stood with his chin in his right hand. The silence was long and Tierney dared not break it.

Finally the head of the Central Office turned and came back to his desk; he pressed the button which would call Faurot, head of the Bertillon department.

Faurot came quickly in response to the summons.

"Bring me all the records in the case of Iowa Mike," was the terse order his chief gave him.

As Faurot disappeared the inspector turned again to Tierney.

"Remove the cover of that fireplace," he commanded.

Tierney obeyed.

"Pile all this truck in the grate," McCafferty ordered, brusquely.

Tierney packed the grate with old letters and documents.

Faurot returned, with plates and records and negatives of Iowa Mike.

"Have you got the pictures and the prints of the fingers from the Gallery?" demanded McCafferty.

"Everything, sir, is here," replied Faurot.

"You may retire."

As he left the room McCafferty locked the door.

"Put 'em in the fireplace," he commanded Tierney.

The inspector himself lit the match.

"Tierney," he said as the blaze kindled, "it wasn't your fault. It was mine. I am being shoved aside. I'll say good-by now."

He extended his hand to his faithful though obtuse subordinate.

Tierney took it.

"Good-by, boss," said the detective.

"Me old mother prays for both of us every morning at seven o'clock mass."

Father Watt's Knitting

BY

SAMUEL BARCLAY

ILLUSTRATED BY H. S. POTTER

ON summer evenings Father Watt, having watered his flowers, liked to sit at his gate for a while before Even Song and knit. A board with one end nailed to the gate-post and the other to the pepper tree that grew there served well as a seat, and the tree trunk sheltered him alike from the wind that came down the avenue—a clean wind with a fine tang of salt in it—and from prying eyes. Every one in Bolinas knew that Father Watt wrote his sermons, as he sometimes said, “with a knitting needle,” and all the world might view him from afar—a small, alert figure as brown and weather-beaten as the little parish house behind the bending hollyhocks and sunflowers—knitting away at the lamp mats which he made and unraveled again and again, but an approach always disclosed him smiling his welcome—empty-handed! And even Father Watt himself did not know how many stitches he blotted into oblivion by sitting too hastily on his knitting.

This was the hour when all Bolinas, except of course Madam Pollard, who



Fidelo

had taken to her bed early that summer, came and went on Grande Vista Avenue—so proudly named because at the top of the bluff where it ends, the horizon backs suddenly against the sky in a vast semi-circle to the far line of which the fretted rim of the ocean lifts.

Father Watt, as well as another, might have gone down to the *embarcadero* to see that Captain Flint safely

docked the *Ida W.* or to stop at the store for his mail, but he preferred to sit and knit.

There had never been a bell in the belfry of St. Peter's-By-the-Sea, a deficiency in its equipment which he realized was of great assistance to delinquents in search of excuses, and he did much with his quick smile of reminder to prevent the desuetude of evening prayer in the town. He was always ready to make room on the seat for whomever cared to sit there, and the evening breeze caught and carried into the murmuring garden—and lost there—many a low-breathed confession, and many a hungry and uncertain heart had he led gently back to comfort, sitting quietly by his gate.

From his seat he had watched without dismay the Pageant of Bolinas on Grande Vista Avenue year by year slip from the keeping of its townspeople under the leadership of Madam Pollard, into the sway of the summer colony. He admired the valiant stand Madam Pollard had made to retain her place as the Personage of Bolinas, but he saw now that her deposition, in summer at least, had been inevitable from the moment Mrs. Flora Hayes-Griffith first appeared with three automobiles, a schooner load of servants and a nephew with another automobile.

The summer people now whizzed down from the club house they had built on the Mesa, or boomed over the bluff from the beach, grinding the avenue to dust beneath the plutocratic tires of their almost countless machines. The townspeople trudged back and forth as they had done for a generation, save that now they occasionally scuttled protestingly for the sidewalks. And Madam Pollard had taken to her bed, whence, with much circumstance of voice and gesture, she announced herself the victim of a mysterious malady, the most startling manifestation of which was the total incapacity of her legs! Father Watt soothed the indignant townspeople who cited Madam as one of the effects of the summer invasion, and pointed out to the protestants that there was scarcely danger of the entire town being laid flat

on its back, which was Madam's graphic and inaccurate description of her own state. Father Watt had his own opinion as to the real cause of Madam's affliction, suspecting it to reside in an affected temper, for he knew that the attentions of Selig Hayes, Mrs. Hayes-Griffith's nephew, to Fidele, Madam's granddaughter, had been the object of Madam's unfavorable consideration for the last three seasons.

Father Watt regarded Mrs. Hayes-Griffith with that tolerance which, he told himself, was always engendered by a broad view of any subject. To him she was a perfectly natural and entirely fascinating, if utterly unfamiliar phenomenon. He remembered, as he sat at his gate this evening, that to-day, after an absence of almost three weeks, her big green touring car had reappeared on the avenue. He was not surprised when he saw it dart over the brow of the bluff, Mrs. Hayes-Griffith herself at the wheel, and grind down the avenue, trailing clouds of dust, but he observed with a wave of dismay that one brown arm, bare to the elbow, was reaching about to slow the machine, and he knew that she never slowed except when she stopped. In a moment the huge car heaved to a standstill and almost before Father Watt could dispose of his knitting, its occupant had jumped lightly out and was at the gate, with a certain spontaneous width of manner that seemed to draw into the radius of her good will the entire working plant of St. Peter's-By-the-Sea—the little church across the garden, the parish house, the garden and Father Watt.

She was a little woman given to curves which were beginning to convey a suggestion of bulging, and Father Watt had time to wonder how she managed to give the effect of really taking steps, so closely did the hem of her skirt hug her ankles!

"May I come in?" she asked, and engaged his glance with a thrust from beneath the brim of her absurdly large hat. "Just for a minute—the dear garden!" For she was through the gate before Father Watt could quite arrange in

order the hospitable words he wished to utter.

"How do you keep your wall flowers blooming *so long*? And the pansies!"

She was down on her knees, her incredibly long green veil sweeping Father Watt's shell-covered path like a length of sea fern. Father Watt bent to pick the pansies for her, but Mrs. Hayes-Griffith was up and on to a row of cannas.

"Oh, don't pick them!" she implored, looking back. "You know I believe that whatever lives should not be deprived of its life—even flowers!"

She turned and contemplated Father Watt, her hands clasped. Father Watt did not even raise his glance to the two big, green birds that appeared to have been strangled to death on the brim of her hat.

"I've been very ill, you know!" She drew her shoulders together and puckered her lips and closed her eyes and frowned. "Very ill!" She opened her eyes. "I fancy that's why I want everything to have life."

"I missed you coming and going," Father Watt answered. "I heard—"

"This is the first time I've been out for nearly three weeks!" She moved toward Father Watt's bench with her disconcerting haste. "May I sit here?" she questioned as though to sit there were some very special privilege.

"If you will be so good." And Father Watt bowed as though to have her sit there were a particular honor.

"And will *you* sit here?" she laughed and patted the seat beside her and looked up at him. He did so. "I've been shut up at 'Bay's Head' for over a fortnight," she went on. "Not allowed to see anyone and not allowed to speak even to my nurse!" Father Watt digested the news of this prodigious feat of silence with carefully repressed amazement. "The rest cure, you know," she further elucidated.

"And you are better now?"

"Better! I'm utterly, absurdly well. That's what I've come to talk to you about. I want to make a thank offering—some recognition of my recovery, you

know—some improvement in the church, for instance!"

She laid the back of one hand loosely in the palm of the other in her lap and leaned toward him as though to signify that she was all humble thankfulness.

Father Watt felt hurriedly for his knitting and desisted as quickly. "You are very kind," he said lamely.

"I thought I might put a spire on the belfry. Oh, Father Watt"—she laid her hand on his arm—"how beautiful it would be if I could do that, and then when I come down from 'Bay's Head' I could see it through the trees—I do love a spire through trees!"

This sudden offer of improvement for St. Peter's took Father Watt's breath away. "Spires are very beautiful," he said. And at that moment, to complicate matters for him, there leaped into his mind the disconcerting memory of a family on the other side of the Bay whose needs were very great.

"Or a window!" Mrs. Hayes-Griffith turned again toward him, drawing up her shoulders and pressing her clasped hands into her lap. "A rose window, my dear Father Watt!" Then she allowed her intensity to relax as though the idea had been too much for it.

"I can't imagine anything more beautiful than a rose window," Father Watt declared—as indeed he could not. He had the family on the other side of the Bay in his mind and he thought with a sense of relief for his project concerning them which had grown on the instant that a philanthropist divided between spires and windows was more easily diverted than a person decided upon either one or the other.

"Over the altar," pursued Mrs. Hayes-Griffith. "And when I come to early service—I have determined to be very regular hereafter—how beautiful it will be to watch the sun through my window—the sunlight through stained glass, Father Watt—" She paused as though its beauties were best imagined in silence.

"It is inspiring," agreed Father Watt, who had served at the altar of St. Peter's-By-the-Sea for twenty years and was desperately trying to remember just what

was the design of the chancel window.

"Or if there are any other improvements for St. Peter's—such a dear church—"

There were many improvements of which Father Watt could think at that moment. The foundations—but he felt that foundations would not appeal to Mrs. Hayes-Griffith; besides, the family on the other side of the Bay held his imagination. "There are a great many things to be done, Mrs. Hayes-Griffith, and it is kind of you to think of doing them. We need so many things, my church and"—he paused—"my parish. You know it extends to the other side of the Bay," he reminded her. "Your generous offer is so sudden—"

"I thought of it just as I was coming down the avenue and caught sight of you sitting here as I see you every evening—I thought how beautiful it would be if when I come into the village from the other side I could also see a spire—I've already given the club a thank offering—a pair of andirons for our living room. I'm on my way to the *Ida W.* to get them and I'm going to take them back. It really seemed as though I ought to do something serious—" She rose. "I can't stop any longer now. I'm simply famished to see my andirons off the *Ida W.* and in place, up at the club—I'll stop to-morrow evening."

She made her way to the gate, her green veil floating out behind, her brown arms stretching out before. Father Watt was there first this time and he bowed, following Mrs. Hayes-Griffith to her machine. He approached it with trepidation, for he had ridden often with Selig Hayes in his wicked roadster and was aware of certain complications in getting the things under way. He wondered just what he should do for Mrs. Hayes-Griffith, but that lady went about matters with an intensely expert manner and the machine responded instantly. She bounced into her seat, slipped under the wheel and touched her foot here and there. The car began to throb and heave and the next moment was humming down the avenue, Mrs. Hayes-Griffith's green veil floating out behind.

The sun by now had dropped so low that mists, rising out of the ocean, embraced its rays and were dyed yellow. It was through this golden haze that Father Watt, as he turned, looked at the young girl who had come out of Madam Pollard's gate and was moving quickly down the avenue toward him. The light breeze caught her skirts and fluttered them out behind her and a strand of her blue-black hair waved across her forehead. She swayed forward as she came, her chin thrust out, her arms held a little away from her supple body as though she moved eagerly to meet the wind and would embrace it. And each step promised that the next would not touch the earth, so lightly did her foot press the ground. Father Watt felt his heart grow warm within him as he watched her and he had a fleeting consciousness of that panic which always seized him at sight of her perfect, blooming youth. He was glad of his garden with its wealth of flowers, all fresh and young and beautiful as she, where he in his faded vesture could receive her. When she came nearer he saw that her eyes—blue-gray they were, like the sky on a misty morning—harbored clouds of anxiety.

"Oh, Father," the girl began almost before she had reached him, "you must read this!" She handed him a note as she passed swiftly through the gateway and seated herself.

Father Watt, following her, took out his glasses and adjusted them. He looked at the letter and then he looked over his glasses at Fidele and his glance dropped to her hands, so tightly clasped in her lap it seemed that nothing would unwind her lithe, brown fingers. He sat quickly beside her and Fidele began suddenly to speak.

"Oh, Father Watt," she said swiftly, "in a little while Selig will be here—I said I'd be here as usual." Her voice died in its whispers and Father Watt turned the letter over and over in his hands, staring at it. "I'm going to tell him we must not see each other any more. It—I—it isn't right—"

Father Watt did not speak. He put



"I do love a spire through trees!"

the note, still unread, on the seat beside him and feeling about himself experimentally, finally produced his knitting. In a moment he was in full swing, his fingers darting back and forth.

"Child," he began, counting the stitches over his glasses, "you have found you do not love Selig?"

"Oh, Father Watt!" Fidele breathed—and shivered.

"Forgive me," pleaded Father Watt, who had indeed known that it couldn't be true. "But if you love Selig, you and

he may meet here in my garden always." He gestured toward his garden, full of nodding, scented flowers. "Always." He smiled at her.

"But I must give him up! I am afraid I'm killing grandmother. She says I am. She says she's going to die—and I'm to blame for it!"

"There has been a sudden change, then?" questioned Father Watt, still counting stitches over his glasses.

Fidele pointed toward the note. "It's all there," she said.

Father Watt put down his knitting and took up the note again.

"When I saw Madam Pollard this morning just before luncheon she seemed the same as usual. In fact"—he looked down at the note in his hand and scratched his chin—"she seemed a trifle more vigorous than usual. Indeed—" Father Watt stopped. He ran his hand down over his face until he came to his lower lip. This he pulled out, and gazed up into the air. His warm, pointed conversation with Madam Pollard all came back to him now. He could see Madam Pollard, straight and stiff in her great bed at her window, her shrewd little face as brown and seamed as a walnut. He remembered, not without a qualm of reproach, now that he saw the effect of his indiscretion on Fidele, that he had told Madam Pollard he would marry Fidele and Selig whenever they came to him with a license. He realized now that it was a mistake to show one's hand to Madam Pollard.

"A good deal more vigorous than usual," he repeated, spreading the note on his knee and looking mildly over his glasses at Fidele.

"She's a very old lady," Fidele objected, doubtfully.

"And a very obstinate one," interpolated Father Watt as he read. "An obstinate old—old—creature!" He breathed the phrase luxuriously into the air and took off his glasses and stared ahead of him. Madam Pollard's note announced her determination to dispose of certain property for the purpose of raising money to purchase a bell for St. Peter's.

"You know, Father Watt," Fidele said, "Grandmother has always said that when she felt she was going to die she intended buying a bell for the church, to be rung."—Fidele bent and buried her face in her hands and wept—"at her funeral!"

"I know! She reminds me of that in her letter." Father Watt suddenly folded the letter with the utmost vigor and crammed it into his pocket. He touched Fidele's head lightly as he took up his knitting. "There!" he pleaded.

But Fidele did not sit up. "She talked it all over with me, after you left this morning," she went on in a muffled tone. "I must give up Selig."

Father Watt unraveled his lamp mat with two swings of his arm. Then he began to wind the unraveled string on the ball. He had a vision of Madam Pollard on her feet and about again, the instant Selig Hayes was conclusively out of the way. Yet he was powerless. Madam Pollard held the reins of the situation firmly in her determined, selfish, old hands. As long as she stayed on her bed and as long as Fidele's sense of duty endured there was no way out of the tangle. He could only play for time.

"You must think of Selig, too," he said at last. "Will it be quite fair to him to sacrifice him to your grandmother? I admire your fortitude, but—" He paused and added in even tones, "Selig loves you."

"I know! I know!" Fidele cried as she sat erect. She leaned back against the tree trunk and covered her face with her hands. Father Watt did not say anything more and he did not look at her, but he wound his string with such force that he broke it short off and the ball rolled unheeded to the ground. Then Father Watt saw with a mingled sense of relief and dismay that Selig Hayes' big, long-nosed, low-seated roadster had turned into the avenue and was snorting up toward the parish house. "Dear child," he pleaded of Fidele, "pray say nothing to Selig just yet." Fidele turned aside briefly to make ready her welcome for him. When she looked again she was smiling and Father Watt told himself that when she smiled you could not think that she had ever wept!

Selig came through the gateway in a bound, tearing off goggles and gauntlets as he came. He held out his hands to Fidele and during the interval that elapsed Father Watt made a wide and thorough search beneath the bench for his ball of string—which he recovered almost the instant Selig turned to greet him.

Father Watt made the interchange of civilities as brief as possible, as though

anxious to remove his personality from the scene with the greatest expedition. He requested Selig to be seated, making a place between himself and Fidele, and immediately addressed himself to his knitting with such enthusiasm and concentration that his needles flew back and forth at lightning speed and, as though the speed of his needles had aroused his brain to unwonted action, he began to talk in loud, preachy tones. It would have been obvious to anyone sitting beside him that he could not possibly be aware of one small hand slipped into a larger, ardent one. After a while, having apparently exhausted his supply of homilies, which it must be admitted was not a large one, because Father Watt rarely called upon it and never added to it, he addressed the two young people.

"It will soon be time for Even Song," he declared, consulting the sky as he proceeded with his knitting. "You had better go across to church—I shall go presently to vest."

They arose and moved off down the winding path that branched presently, and led them away into the scented shadows of his garden. Father Watt watched them go. He knew that it was not yet time for Even Song, but, he reflected, time was purely a relative term. To Fidele and Selig, wandering up and down his odorous garden, it would be but a moment until they were summoned to Even Song, while to himself, knitting alone on his bench—

But he was not to be alone for long. Selig and Fidele had scarcely disappeared behind the hollyhocks and sunflowers when the sound of Mrs. Hayes-Griffith's returning automobile came up the avenue. His knitting disappeared and he hurried to the gate as he saw that she was again going to stop. She was accompanied this time by Captain Flint of the *Ida W.*, or more properly on land, Doctor Flint. He occupied the tonneau of the machine with what Father Watt recognized as the andirons.

"Oh, Father Watt," Mrs. Hayes-Griffith cried, reaching behind to the andirons as the machine stopped, "I want you to see my thank-offering for the

club." She put her hand lovingly on them. "I simply couldn't wait to have them unpacked at the club house. Aren't they beauties? Cap—I mean Doctor Flint ordered them for me. I couldn't possibly exist in Bolinas if Doc—I mean Captain Flint weren't so good about doing things for me." Father Watt greeted Doctor Flint and turned his attention to the andirons.

"I've told Cap—I mean Doctor Flint," Mrs. Hayes-Griffith raced on, "about my going to do something for St. Peter's-By-the-Sea. He thinks a spire would be heavenly!"

"Mrs. Hayes-Griffith has been kind enough to suggest either a spire or a chancel window," Father Watt explained to Doctor Flint. He was determined, with the thought of the family across the Bay still in his mind, that she should not forget her indecision between spires and windows. "What an admirable piece of work!" He leaned further over to lay an appreciative hand on the andirons, caressing them knowingly. "Hand work, eh, Flint?"

The Captain-Doctor bent to inspect the andirons, but Father Watt's enthusiasm suddenly evaporated. In leaning over he had felt in his pocket the crinkle of Madam Pollard's letter, in which she, like Mrs. Hayes-Griffith, expressed a desire to enrich St. Peter's. Unlike Mrs. Hayes-Griffith, however, her benefaction knew no uncertainty, although as to its ultimate manifestation, Father Watt had grave doubts. It was contingent upon Madam's death, which Father Watt fancied was not so close as that lady affected to believe.

"Doctor Flint was particularly interested in my gift," Mrs. Hayes-Griffith was saying, "because he has never tried the rest cure on any of his patients."

"None of them would ever stay in bed long enough to take the cure you describe," Doctor Flint declared.

"There's that dear, diverting old lady up the avenue," Mrs. Hayes-Griffith reminded him, and it took Father Watt quite a moment to recognize Madam Pollard under this genial appellation. "I always wave to her as I go by and she

leans forward—so interested!" Mrs. Hayes-Griffith continued. She had ever remained unaware of the emotion she really inspired in the bosom of Madam Pollard.

Father Watt's mind was busily engaged along other lines, but he took time to consider the situation which Mrs. Hayes-Griffith's words presented to his imagination. He looked down his nose and then, as though his glance had encountered something humorous, he put his hand hastily over his mouth. He was occupied entirely by the thought of Madam Pollard's state of mind as she leaned forward responding with so much interest to Mrs. Hayes-Griffith's joyous salute. "Now the rest cure would be just the thing for her, if she has something the matter with her nerves. I believe you said she had?" And Mrs. Hayes-Griffith challenged Doctor Flint.

"I said 'nerves,'" declared the doctor, "because there didn't seem to be anything else that could be the matter. She can't walk."

"She says her legs have given out," announced Father Watt in an unnecessarily loud tone. He was more than half occupied with a project that was slowly forming itself in his mind.

"Legs!" echoed Mrs. Hayes-Griffith mechanically. "Fancy!" She was evidently then seized with a qualm of doubt as to the propriety of this as a subject for contemplation and immediately broke in with, "I understand she has a niece—"

"Granddaughter!" shot out Father Watt.

"Oh, granddaughter," corrected Mrs. Hayes-Griffith, glancing apprehensively at him. "Quite a pretty girl, I believe?" And her gaze fastened itself on Selig Hayes' automobile drawn up before the parish house.

"And as good and sweet as she is pretty," added Father Watt in his normal tones.

"I've heard my nephew speak of her a number of times. He seemed rather interested in her—" She laughed. "But of course—"

"Yes," agreed Father Watt amiably. He looked squarely at Mrs. Hayes-Grif-

fith. "They are together now in my garden," he added blandly. In the light of this bald statement Mrs. Hayes-Griffith found nothing to say. "Selig comes to Even Song every night and so does Fidele Sarmet. They frequently walk in my garden before service."

Whatever may have been Mrs. Hayes-Griffith's emotions on this subject they were lost in a rush of enthusiasm. "Even Song!" exclaimed she. "I—really I forgot all about it. Is the service well attended?"

"Not very." Father Watt shook his head. He leaned on the edge of the automobile and felt again the crinkle of Madam Pollard's letter. "You see," he said slowly, his eyes on the andirons, "we have no bell in St. Peter's to call the people and the service is often forgotten."

"I should think all the villagers would come—how romantic!" Her enthusiasm began to bubble.

"If they could hear the sound of a bell—" Father Watt went on, gazing into space. "I have often fancied a bell ringing out—one could hear it from afar." Musingly.

"The Angelus!" breathed Mrs. Hayes-Griffith. Her glance fixed Father Watt with hypnotic intensity. "The sound would carry far in this still air—" There was a moment's silence broken only by the boom of the ocean wafted over the bluff on the evening breeze.

"I can very well fancy sitting on the veranda at 'Bay's Head' and listening to the Angelus," Father Watt declared with an ingenuous glance.

Mrs. Hayes-Griffith drew in one deep breath. "Father Watt," she exclaimed in hushed accents, "I shall put a bell in the belfry of St. Peter's!" She settled back triumphantly in her seat.

If Father Watt had contemplated any such turn in events, he counterfeited an admirable appearance of surprise.

"My dear Mrs. Hayes-Griffith!" he exclaimed.

Down the avenue he could see the restricted vista of the Ridge across the Bay. He had not forgotten the family that lived there, but he turned a little



They moved off down the winding path

and, through his garden, discreetly screened by the hollyhocks and sunflowers, he fancied he caught a glimpse of two figures—young they were, in the first flush of hope and youth. Father Watt's heart went out to them and he ruthlessly sacrificed the family on the other side of the Bay.

"That would be a thank-offering," he declared. "Flint!" He turned to the doctor. "You see what the rest cure has done for St. Peter's through the kindness of Mrs. Hayes-Griffith. You must really try it on Madam Pollard, as Mrs. Hayes-Griffith suggests—"

"It's the simplest thing imaginable," interrupted Mrs. Hayes-Griffith. "And Doctor Flint can have the nurse that's been attending me. You simply shut your patient up in a room and—"

"Now, Father Watt," interrupted Doctor Flint with a laugh, "*you* know the first time anything happened that Madam Pollard did not like or she heard anything going on outside that she wanted to know about, why—" He threw up his hands. "She'd be out like a shot!"

"But if she had something the matter with her legs," Mrs. Hayes-Griffith broke in, "how could she? And if she did—don't you see, she'd be cured. Wouldn't she?" This to Father Watt.

Father Watt had been looking down his nose again. He glanced up and regarded Mrs. Hayes-Griffith with a far-away expression. "It seems reasonable," he agreed blandly.

"And when Madam Pollard finds that somebody is going to do something for St. Peter's without consulting her, we won't be able to keep her quiet anyway," Doctor Flint went on.

Father Watt turned impressively to Mrs. Hayes-Griffith. "You really think you would care to make such an offering?" he questioned.

"I'm absolutely in love with the thought," declared she. "Absolutely! Father Watt," she implored, "you will allow me to do it? I don't wish to upset Madam Pollard—"

"We've only Doctor Flint's word that it will—"

"Doctor Flint,"—Mrs. Hayes-Griffith turned to him—"you must persuade Madam Pollard to take the rest cure. That will keep her out of the way until the bell is in place—"

Doctor Flint looked doubtful.

"At least it can do her no harm," urged Father Watt.

"Don't tell her anything about the bell and when she is through the rest cure—you can bring the bell from the city for me and we can have it in place about the time she comes out of her room—she'll hear the Angelus ringing through the air—" Mrs. Hayes-Griffith leaned back in her seat and closed her eyes as though the better thus to realize Madam Pollard's beatific state of mind under these conditions. And Father Watt, to avoid what might otherwise have seemed a disrespectful noise in his throat, coughed.

It was finally agreed between them that a campaign of silence should ensue concerning the bell and that Doctor Flint and Father Watt should persuade Madam Pollard for her own sake and for the sake of Mrs. Hayes-Griffith's bell-project, to take the rest cure. Father Watt engaged himself to call on Madam Pollard and present to her the idea of the rest cure in its most favorable light.

When Mrs. Hayes-Griffith's car had disappeared over the bluff, Father Watt turned back to his garden. He felt that he began to see a solution of the problem that confronted Fidele and Selig, and he went to meet them as they came cautiously around a bend in the path that led across to the church. Father Watt always enjoyed Selig Hayes. He had once heard Mrs. Hayes-Griffith say of her nephew that she perfectly understood the "Hayes" of him because that was her brother "all over again," but that the "Selig" of him was beyond her comprehension. It was the "Selig" that Father Watt enjoyed. Selig's mother had been a Russian whose fine, narrow features he had inherited. His broad shoulders and sturdy frame and flaming hair he had from his father. His nose was American. It leaped from between his

eyes, as if in eager search of adventure. Selig when he walked threw forward his head and thrust out his chin as though determined to be no further behind his nose in the scramble for adventure than he could avoid.

"Young people," began Father Watt abusively, so abusively that Selig opened his black eyes and stared at the gentle little man, "why don't you get married?"

"Married?" Selig repeated. They stared at each other. "Why—Fidele and I—" Selig drew her to him. "We'd marry right now, wouldn't we?" he demanded of Fidele, who made no denial, "—if it wasn't for Fidele's grandmother—"

"You have the license, then?" Father Watt demanded.

Fidele and Selig only stared at each other again.

"There, you see!" Father Watt shot out at them triumphantly. "I couldn't marry you, could I, without a license?" Fiercely: "You don't expect me to do that, do you? I chaperon you. I lay myself liable to the dispa'sure of two estimable ladies, Madam Pollard and Mrs. Hayes-Griffith—"

"Oh, Aunt Flora will be tickled to death," interrupted Selig with an assurance born apparently of intimate experience with his aunt's enthusiastic temperament, "if you put it to her romantically."

"I do all these things,"—Father Watt waved the interruption aside—"and, not satisfied, you seem to expect of me a culpable disregard of the law. Sir—"

"But, Father Watt," Fidele protested, "you know I can't leave Grandmother even to go with Selig to get a license, and even if we had a license, you know I can't—"

"Doctor Flint is going to take care of your grandmother, child. He's to try a new treatment—for her legs. He'll tell you about it. There's to be a nurse—"

"Oh, and will it get her on her feet?" demanded Fidele.

"Child! Child!" Father Watt admonished. "Doctor Flint will do the best he can."

"If there's a nurse," interrupted Selig, "you can go with me to get a license. I'll make Aunt Flora go with us—"

Fidele was a little pitiful. She smiled up to her eyes, which looked out doubtfully. She looked at Father Watt. She looked at Selig, radiating enthusiasm to the tip of his nose. "You know," she said, "Grandmother comes first. That has always to be so,"—bravely. "I—" she faltered. "Until Grandmother is well and on her feet I cannot—I am not free at all—"

"My child—" Father Watt touched her lightly on the forehead with the tips of his fingers, "I christened you 'Fidele.' I could not think of you as anything else. Faithful!" His voice lingered on the word. "You go with Selig and his aunt and get the license, but,"—he put his hand on Selig's shoulder—"there will be no wedding, until Madam Pollard can walk to it!" Then he moved away between the rows of hollyhocks and sunflowers, a bright light in his eyes—eyes that did not fail when the benediction came at Vespers, to rest on the two young figures kneeling side by side in the dim rear of the church.

Nearly three weeks later Father Watt sat as usual at his gate in the twilight. He was not knitting because too many people were passing on their way to St. Peter's-By-the-Sea for Even Song. From where he sat Father Watt could see up the steps of St. Peter's and in through the door of the church. Over the heads of the little knot of people that had gathered at the porch, he could just make out the rope of the new bell swaying in the dim vestibule. For the first time in the history of the parish it was to hear the Angelus. Already Mrs. Hayes-Griffith's automobile was drawn up at the edge of the sidewalk and Mrs. Hayes-Griffith herself was devoting these last few moments to a silent communion with her emotions. She was to be the first to ring the bell she had presented.

Madam Pollard alone of all Bolinas was ignorant of the existence of the bell. Separated from the rest of the world

by a trained nurse she was taking the rest cure! When Father Watt, true to his promise to Doctor Flint, had called upon Madam Pollard, he explained to her that Mrs. Hayes-Griffith had said Bolinas was too far behind the times to know anything about the rest cure. Quoting Mrs. Hayes-Griffith further, he said it was a thing that few were privileged to enjoy. His interview had been made up almost entirely of quotations from Madam's rival. Mrs. Hayes-Griffith says so and so, and so forth! Thus goaded, Madam capitulated. The trained nurse she endured after Father Watt, in her presence, had made it perfectly clear to that capable person that Madam Pollard obeyed the restrictions because she wished to do so. Father Watt had heard his instructions to the nurse in this respect supplemented by Madam Pollard to the effect that she would terminate all arrangements whenever it suited her inclination. With these facts firmly established, Madam Pollard submitted herself to the treatment which Mrs. Hayes-Griffith had rashly thought was reserved only for wealthy summer people!

Presently Doctor Flint stopped among the passing townspeople, on his way back from Madam Pollard's.

"What does nurse report?" Father Watt questioned.

"Nurse has always said there was nothing the matter with her." Doctor Flint looked at Father Watt, who scratched his chin. "She says she is still unable to use her legs—I had hoped to have her up before Selig Hayes went back to the city this season—"

"Selig should have gone two weeks ago, he tells me." Father Watt rose as he spoke. "All the rest of the summer people have gone; Mrs. Hayes-Griffith goes to-morrow. But I kept Selig here—Fidele and I."

Doctor Flint raised his eyebrows.

"Selig carries a license about in his pocket waiting for the moment you get Madam Pollard on her feet. He and Fidele are in the church now. If he goes away this year—" Father Watt shook his head. "I feel that Fidele is being sacrificed too much to her grandmother."

"We all feel that way," agreed the doctor. "I had hoped this treatment would result in something—"

Father Watt had bent to examine the tender, crêpe-like petals of a crimson blooming hollyhock. "Who knows?" he questioned enigmatically and then he hurried off toward the vestry.

Quite a congregation was on the steps and porch and, more thinly, in the vestibule for the first ringing of the bell when Father Watt, fully vested, took his stand beside Mrs. Hayes-Griffith.

It was not quite time for Even Song and Father Watt held his prayer book in one hand and his watch in the other ready to read a short prayer while Mrs. Hayes-Griffith grasped the bell rope, nodding here and there to the little knot of people on the steps.

"It makes me very happy, all this," declared Mrs. Hayes-Griffith in a low voice.

"And me too," agreed Father Watt. He glanced a little behind him at the two rather doleful figures of Selig and Fidele, silhouetted against the dusk of the empty church. "I would be happy if, as a climax to the summer, I might marry Fidele and your nephew—"

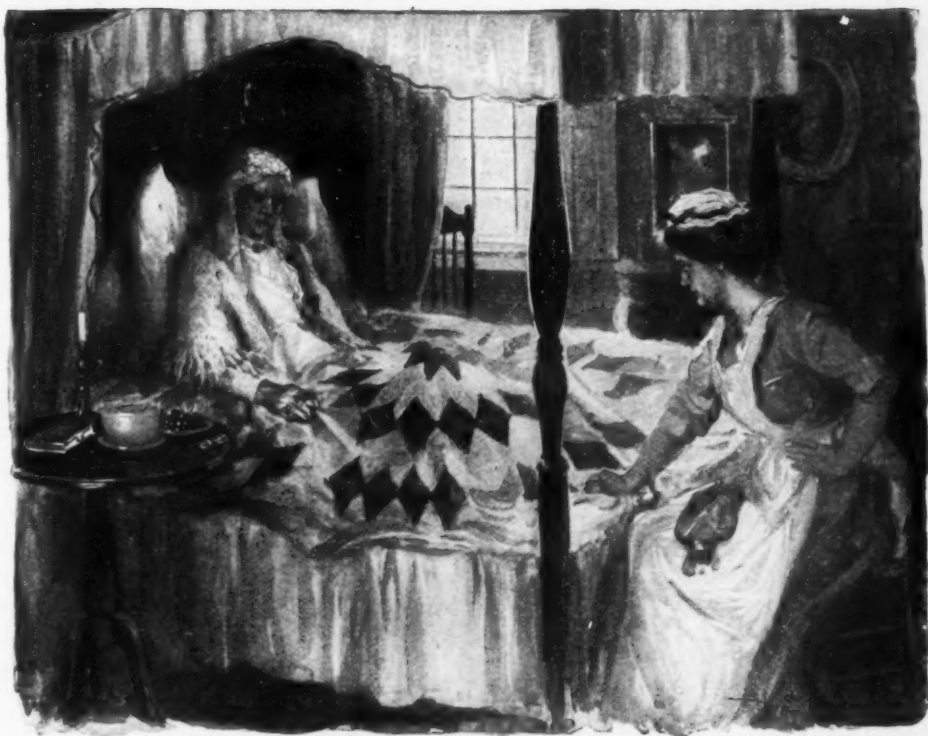
"The dear girl! Since I went with her and Selig to town for that unhappily useless license I have been devoted to her. Does the doctor report anything favorable?"

Father Watt shook his head. He stared out over the heads of the people and up the avenue to where Madam Pollard's gate swung in the evening breeze—a careless state of affairs which would not have obtained a minute had not Madam been shut from the sight of things. Then he closed his watch.

"In a moment," he whispered to Mrs. Hayes-Griffith, who took firmer hold of the rope.

The little crowd jostled about slightly and then stood with bent heads as Father Watt read his prayer.

At the "Ah-mên" Father Watt raised his eyes. "Now!" he said. He spoke to Mrs. Hayes-Griffith, but he stared over the heads of the crowd and up the avenue at Madam Pollard's gate.



Madam Pollard was taking the rest cure

Mrs. Hayes-Griffith's arms descended. There was a stifled clang and then one long, scnorous note gushed from the belfry. Father Watt grasped his prayer book tightly and did not take his glance from Madam Pollard's gate. Up and down went Mrs. Hayes-Griffith's stout, brown arms, an expression of beatific content upon her face. Rich and round the deep bell notes rose and fell on the still evening air—the Angelus!

Suddenly Father Watt drew his prayer book against his breast and his eyes sparkled. He half turned, but Doctor Flint had also seen the white figure at Madam Pollard's gate—a figure in a flowing garment topped by a small brown face—a figure that darted down the avenue toward the church. Mrs. Hayes-Griffith, oblivious to everything, continued ringing. Father Watt did not move. He stretched out his arm to prevent the sudden rush of Fidele—

"Ring on," he said to Mrs. Hayes-Griffith and, she, nothing loath, rang on.

Slipped, in her white bed gown, her two skimp braids flying out behind, Madam Pollard was making her way frantically down the avenue towards St. Peter's. She who had been flat on her back for three months was running!

Heedless of the hand with which Doctor Flint would have detained her, she slipped past him and on toward the church, her eyes on the belfry. Fidele would have rushed to her, but Father Watt, as he made his way to the door, held back his hand. "Wait!" he commanded, and Selig held her. The crowd shifted itself, turning from Mrs. Hayes-Griffith who, her eyes shut, went on ringing. Father Watt hurried down the steps to Madam Pollard.

"Father Watt," cried that little old lady. "I 'ave not die! I 'ave not sol' north field!"

Father Watt took her protesting hands in his. "Indeed you have not died, Madam Pollard," he declared jovially as though to greet Madam Pollard in her bed-room garments at the steps of his church were quite the usual thing. "I congratulate you! You see, Flint," he said to the doctor, who had hurried up on the other side of Madam Pollard with the distracted nurse and was assisting that utterly disorganized individual to wrap Madam in a heavy dressing-gown, "—what your rest cure has done for Madam!"

Madam Pollard leveled on Father Watt a shrewd and twinkling glance and he turned rather hastily to Mrs. Hayes-Griffith on the steps. "See what the rest cure has done for Madam Pollard," he repeated. "Fidele! Selig! Madam Pollard is on her feet!"

Fidele would have moved past Mrs. Hayes-Griffith to her grandmother, but Father Watt waved her back. He had Madam Pollard by the arm and was hurrying her up the steps. "You will come and—and say Vespers," he commanded, "—for the first time in three months!"

But Mrs. Hayes-Griffith blocked the entrance. With her eyes on the heavens she radiated enthusiasm. "Father Watt!" she cried. "Now, before Even Song—and afterwards I shall ring the bell—you must marry Fidele and Selig! Madam Pollard,"—with her two strong arms she lifted that little, brown, twinkling woman off her feet and carried her into the vestibule—"the idea is too ravishing. Fidele! Now that you are on your feet, Madam! I used to see you so often at your window—so dear! My nephew Selig—" Breathless, she brought Madam Pollard to a standstill within the vestibule.

That lady was grimly silent. "Fidele, my chil'," she said in a voice that trembled a little. She took her gaze from

Father Watt—at Mrs. Hayes-Griffith she had not condescended to glance! "Fidele, my little one—"

Fidele was at her grandmother's side instantly. She put her arms tenderly about the old lady and kissed her. When Madam Pollard had her granddaughter safely beside her, she turned bravely upon them.

"But what kin' of a wedding will it be without a license?" she demanded shrewdly. She swept the group with a triumphant glance.

"I have a license." Selig flourished it as he came forward and took Fidele's free hand. And then capitulation softened Madam's grimness. She fought too shrewdly not to know when the battle went against her, and Father Watt sighed with relief when he saw the muscles about her tight little mouth relax. Her eyes sought his knowingly and she shook her finger at him. Then she turned and surveyed Selig. She looked him up and down.

"Father Watt is a good man," she said. "He 'as said you are good enough for my Fidele, my little one—" Slowly she released her hold on Fidele, presenting an advantage that Selig was not slow to grasp. "And he knows," Madam Pollard went on. "For"—she addressed the crowd in general—"he is ver' smart!" And she favored Father Watt with another of her long, shrewd glances.

Mrs. Hayes-Griffith grasped her bell rope. "Now, Father Watt—right here in the vestibule—under my bell—isn't it too ravishing—Fidele, you dear, blushing bride—and I'll ring out wild bells—" She took firmer hold of the bell rope. "Father Watt, I'm waiting—"

Whereupon Father Watt opened his prayer book and came slowly forward from behind the little crowd and faced the two young people who knelt before him on the threshold of the church.

The Skedaddle

BY ELLIS PARKER BUTLER

Author of "Pigs Is Pigs," "Aunt Coruna," etc.

THE Fannings had lived in their built-by-the-contractor suburban house in the village of Westcote just eleven months and fifteen days—and in fifteen days the second payment of one thousand dollars on the purchase price would be due—when Mrs. Fanning spoke.

"George," she said anxiously, "I don't want to worry you, but the kitchen chimney began to lean toward the back yard week before last—"

"Humph!" said Mr. Fanning, grumpily. He was sitting in a rocking chair, rocking thoughtfully backward and forward, and at each motion of the chair the flooring creaked, for the furnace heat during the winter had dried the flooring and loosened it. Eleven months and fifteen days earlier Mr. Fanning had been a cheerful, happy husband, but a year in the beautiful, new, built-by-the-contractor, suburban house had had its effect.

"I didn't mention it before," said Mrs. Fanning, wearily, "for I knew you had enough to worry you, with the front porch sagging at the east end, but to-day the wind has veered to the south, and the Snuffle-sneeze has given notice. As long as the wind was in the north it helped to hold the kitchen chimney up. Of course you can't consider a chimney that is only held in place by a south breeze a first-class chimney, can you?"

"I never said it was a first-class chimney," said Mr. Fanning crossly. "What has the chimney got to do with the Snuffle-sneeze, anyway? She don't have to climb the chimney, does she?"

The Snuffle-sneeze was the maid-of-all-work, and she was the only maid Mrs. Fanning could persuade to stay

in the house, for when it rained the water came through the roof in streams and deluged the bed in the maid's room. Only a maid with a *permanent* cold in the head could live in the room without *getting* a cold in the head.

"She doesn't have to climb the chimney," said Mrs. Fanning, "but she does have to hang out the clothes to dry, on wash-day, and any minute, now that the wind has veered, that chimney is liable to fall and crush her. Now, don't blame me, George. I tried to reason with her, but she says she will *not* be crushed by a kitchen chimney. Working in built-by-the-contractor houses has been her specialty, she says, and she has had everything happen to her that a built-by-the-contractor house can do to a maid-of-all-work except that, but she refuses to have kitchen chimneys fall on her. She says she is too old to begin letting chimneys fall on her."

"All right!" said Mr. Fanning. "Let her go. *I'll* hang out the clothes. Is that all?"

"You'll do no such thing!" said Mrs. Fanning, with spirit. "I'm not going to have you let brick chimneys fall on you, if you *are* my husband."

"Don't worry about *me*," said Mr. Fanning, coldly. "I didn't furnish the bricks for that chimney. The contractor furnished them. Let 'em fall on me if they want to. They're soft. They're so soft they—"

There was a rumbling noise, a ripping of wood and the Snuffle-sneeze came to the parlor door.

"Excuse me, mum—*kerchoo!*—" she said, "but the—*sniff—sniff*—the kitchen chimblly has fell into the back-yard."

"Very well, Ardelia," said Mrs. Fanning calmly. "I wish you would not

bother me with unimportant matters when I am talking to Mr. Fanning. You may go, Ardelia. Now, George, something is bothering you. I can see it in your face. George! Haven't you the thousand dollars to pay on the house?"

"Oh, I have the thousand dollars, all right!" said Mr. Fanning, moving uneasily in his chair.

"I'm glad of that," said Mrs. Fanning. "It would be awful if we couldn't pay it. Awful! Mr. Gratz is a close-fisted, heartless man and everyone says so, and if we didn't pay on the minute he would foreclose the second mortgage and take the house right away from us. Mrs. Whiggin-Plipp says so."

"Oh, yes, I have the thousand dollars!" said Mr. Fanning again. "Only—"

"Only what?" asked Mrs. Fanning.

"Only," said Mr. Fanning, "one thousand dollars only. And I'm puzzled. I'm worried about it, Mary."

"If you have the thousand dollars, I don't see why you should worry," said Mrs. Fanning.

"See here, my dear," said Mr. Fanning. "I have tried to worry this out alone. I have tried to protect you from the annoyance. You have enough to think of. But if you *will* insist on knowing, I'll tell you. There's that chimney—I can't do without a kitchen chimney, can I?"

"No," said Mrs. Fanning, thoughtfully. "A house ought to have a kitchen chimney. Houses usually have them."

"And the porch. A self-respecting man can't live in a house that has a porch that is sitting down at one end and standing up at the other, can he? And the roof. A roof ought to keep out *some* rain. I'm not finicky about roofs, but a roof that lets in *all* the rain isn't a good roof, and you can't say it is!"

"No," said Mrs. Fanning. "I can't."

"Very well," said Mr. Fanning. "There's the plumbing. I don't mind if plumbing leaks at every joint. Plumbing usually does. But when the stopper is pulled out of the wash-tub in the cellar the water runs into the bath-tub on the second floor. That is not right."

"It may not be right," said Mrs. Fanning, "but it is fair, because when the stopper is pulled out of the bath-tub on the second floor the water runs into the wash-tub in the basement. What is fair for a wash-tub is fair for a bath-tub. I don't complain of that. Plumbing is never perfect. All I object to is the kitchen sink."

"What is the matter with the kitchen sink now?" asked Mr. Fanning without emotion.

"I don't know," said Mrs. Fanning. "But when I pull out the stopper the smoke from the range comes out of the kitchen sink."

Mr. Fanning sighed.

"These floors all need relaying, too," he said. "If the boards spread much more it will not be safe to let the baby play on the floor. He'll fall through the cracks into the cellar. I've grown used to sitting here in the parlor and having the steam from the Monday wash come up through the cracks. It is not bad. It is like a Turkish bath. And I don't mind having odors of onions and potatoes and dampness come up through the cracks. But I will not have my only child fall through into the cellar."

For a moment the two were silent.

"Then there is the ceiling of the spare bedroom that fell," said Mrs. Fanning. "That should be shoveled up and put back."

"And the west wall, where the bay window fell into the cellar, ought to be patched," said Mr. Fanning. "So that is the question. Unless this house is thoroughly gone over it will fall to pieces in a few days. Which shall I do? Shall I repair the house with the thousand dollars and let Mr. Gratz foreclose the mortgage and take the house, or shall I pay Mr. Gratz the thousand dollars and let the house fall to pieces? That is the question."

Mrs. Fanning seated herself and folded her hands in her lap, as a woman will. For some minutes she sat, with her forehead wrinkled, thinking deeply.

"Why, George!" she said at last, as if she had made a discovery. "Why, George! It doesn't make any difference

which we do. We wont have any house anyway! If we don't repair the house and it falls down, we will have no house; and if we do repair the house and Mr. Gratz takes it, we will have no house!"

"Exactly!" said Mr. Fanning.

"Then I don't see what difference it makes," said Mrs. Fanning.

"My dear," said Mr. Fanning, desperately, "I'm going to do a thing I never imagined I should have to do. I have tried to be an honest man. I have tried to live as a man should, but a built-by-the-contractor suburban house of this kind will drive a man to insanity if it does not drive him to dishonor. If it were not for you and the child, Mary, I should prefer insanity, but I must think of your future. Dishonored I can still earn a living. Mary, I am *not* going to repair this house. I am *not* going to pay Mr. Gratz. I am going to put that thousand dollars in your name, and you and I and the child will flee. We will go to the far West, and we will let Mr. Gratz do what he pleases. He may foreclose."

"George," said Mrs. Fanning, "there are times when dishonor is honorable. This is one of them."

Mr. Fanning immediately wrote to Mr. Gratz telling him he was unable to make the payment of one thousand dollars.

"I deeply regret this," he wrote, "but it cannot be helped. Circumstances compel it. I have enjoyed living in the house. I have not had one monotonous moment, and I have had many excitingly full days. Time and again my conscience has accused me for taking from you a house like this at the merely nominal price you asked for it. I feel that I have wronged you. I am going to let you take the house. I shall say nothing of the thousand dollars I paid one year ago, nor of the interest on the first mortgage, nor of the interest on the second mortgage, nor of the taxes I have paid, nor of the repairs I have paid for. Take the house, Mr. Gratz. I am not worthy to own such a gem of a dwelling."

The next day Mr. Fanning came home from the city looking more sad and careworn than his wife had ever seen him look.

"Well," he said, "I met Gratz."

"You poor dear!" said Mrs. Fanning. "Was he abusive?"

"No," said Mr. Fanning, "he was not. He was—he was effusive. It's no use. He wont foreclose."

"He wont foreclose the mortgage?"

"No," said Mr. Fanning, wearily. "I told him, cut and out, and again and again, I couldn't pay the thousand dollars, and he patted me on the back and said it did not matter in the least. He said I was one of the best buyers he had ever sold a house to, and he was glad to do me a favor. He said he was willing to let the mortgage stand for a year, or ten years, or a thousand years, without a single payment, so long as I paid interest and taxes and kept the house in repair."

"The wretch!"

"'Gratz,' I said, 'I hate to do it, but I must tell you the truth. I can't pay the interest on that mortgage.' And what do you think he said?"

"What?"

"'Mister Fanning,' he said, 'I like you better as any buyer what I ever have yet. I let that interest go. I aint no squeezer, Mister Fanning. You pay such taxes and keep up such repairs like you have kept up. I don't foreclose no mortgage on *you*.' That's what he said."

"I hope you told him what you thought of him and his house," said Mrs. Fanning, vindictively.

"I said, 'Gratz, I can't pay a cent of taxes. I'm busted. I can't keep up one single repair. I'm bankrupt. I'm down and out!' And what did he say? He said: 'Mister Fanning, we all get such hard-upness sometimes already. I aint no squeezer. I'm a builder. I builds houses and I sells houses. Forget those taxes. And I don't ask you should make no repairs, too. I don't foreclose.' That's what he said. So I said: 'Gratz, you've *got* to take that house back. I wont have it.' He looked

at me a minute. 'I aint got to do nothin',' he said. 'I don't take back no house! You bought it; you got to keep it, You think I'm a woodhead to take back a house like that? Huh! I guess not! Take back nothin'!' And that was all he would say. He wont take the house. He went foreclose. We must keep the house!"

"George!" said Mrs. Fanning, with distress.

"I don't see any help for it," said Mr. Fanning, sadly. "What's that?"

"It is just the ceiling falling in our bedroom," said Mrs. Fanning. "It has been falling all day. I have tied son under our bed so it can't fall on him."

"Has the Snuffle-sneeze gone?"

"Yes. She went this morning. She was cross. She slammed the kitchen door when she went. It sprung the west wall out of plumb."

Mr. Fanning sighed.

"Oh, well! What matter?" he said, wearily. "A few walls more or less don't matter in this kind of house. What's that?"

"It is some one trying to open the front door," said Mrs. Fanning. "It is wedged shut since the front of the house settled this afternoon."

"I thought it was the other end of the porch collapsing," said Mr. Fanning, with relief. "Let whoever it is in through the parlor window. I suppose you haven't been able to close that window?"

"No," said Mrs. Fanning, "it is wedged open. None of the windows will open or close since the house began to slant to the south."

She went to the parlor window, and ushered in a little woman with a sharp, rat-like nose, dressed in black calico, with a red shawl thrown over her head. It was Mrs. Whiggin-Plipp, who lived next door in a house built by the Whiggins in the old, old days, before Mr. Gratz had ever thought of taking to building houses. She entered cautiously and tried the floor by bouncing on it a little before she took a seat.

"Well!" she said. "I must say you let this house get in about as bad repair

as ever a house could, and I thought you would the day I set eyes on you. I'm a Whiggin, if I did marry a Plipp, and I keep my house in repair, which was more than any mortal could do with Bill Plipp, for a more shiftless, worthless man never lived. We Whiggins have lived here since 1689—"

"For goodness' sake," whispered Mr. Fanning to his wife, "try to get rid of that bird of ill omen. I have all I can stand now."

Mrs. Fanning was a sweet woman naturally, but she set her lips now.

"Mrs. Plipp," she said, "we do not care at all when the Whiggins came to this town. My husband has just come home. We have important things to talk of and we would like to be alone."

"Well!" said Mrs. Whiggin-Plipp. "Why two ordinary people should want to be alone when they can have the company of a Whiggin is beyond me, but I'm a good neighbor, and I make my neighbors' business mine—"

"You certainly do!" said Mrs. Fanning, meaningly.

"And well I may," said the Whiggin-Plipp, "for I hold the first mortgage on all this property, and who should take an interest if I don't? I see the Snuffle-sneeze has left you."

"She has," said Mrs. Fanning, stiffly.

"Rats desert a sinking ship," said the Whiggin-Plipp. "And if there ever was a rat, the Snuffle-sneeze is one. I wouldn't have her in my house a minute."

"You sent her to us," said Mrs. Fanning.

"I do a great many things," said the Whiggin-Plipp, "but I don't let my kitchen chimney clutter up my backyard for days at a time."

"Did I build the chimney?" asked Mr. Fanning, angrily.

"No, you didn't," said the Whiggin-Plipp. "Gratz built it. And it is one thing to build a house and another to buy it. A builder can build any kind of a house he wants to build, if that is the kind of houses he is building, but no man with sense would buy 'em. I own the first mortgage on all this property—"

"Mrs. Whiggin-Plipp," said Mr. Fanning, looking straight into her eyes, "you have told me that a thousand times, if you have told me once. I *know* you own the first mortgage on this property. You needn't crow over me. My wife and I have tried to be good neighbors. We have put up with your impertinences with patience for a full year. We have let you manage our affairs, or think you were managing them. We have let you come here and talk about Whiggins by the hour and day and week. I don't want to be rude. I don't want to be unkind. But to-night I am tried almost beyond endurance. You don't want us to think you are a nuisance, do you?"

Mrs. Whiggin-Plipp looked at him with surprise.

"A Whiggin is never a nuisance," she said without resentment.

"A Whiggin can be one," said Mr. Fanning, "when she comes at a time like this. Gratz has just told me I can't get rid of this house. He wont foreclose. He wont take the house as a gift. I can't sell it. Mrs. Whiggin-Plipp, I am saddled with this house forever!"

"Humph!" said the Whiggin-Plipp, elevating her nose a little more. "So that's it, is it? Well, I try to be a good neighbor—"

"You said that once," said Mr. Fanning.

"Well, we Whiggins settled here in 1689—"

"You said that once," said Mr. Fanning.

"Well," said Mrs. Whiggin-Plipp, "when the Snuffle-sneeze—"

"You mentioned her before," said Mr. Fanning.

"When the Snuffle-sneeze came to me to-day," continued the Whiggin-Plipp, relentlessly, "and said she couldn't live in this house any more, I saw it was time to act. When that Snuffle-sneeze can't live in a house it isn't a house. It's an I-don't-know-what. 'Cornelia

Whiggin-Plipp,' I said to myself, 'if that Snuffle-sneeze can't live in that house it's time to act! Rats desert a sinking ship. Rats and Gratz, both of 'em do. 'Time to foreclose!' That's what I said. 'Time to foreclose!'"

Mr. and Mrs. Fanning were swayed by the same idea. Mr. Fanning gulped. Mrs. Fanning swallowed. Unknown to his wife Mr. Fanning had, two days before located back in the city—in the heart of the city almost—a flat. It was a steam heated flat with regular walls and ceilings. Even during his inspection Mr. Fanning heard the steam pipes pound and the song they pounded reached his heart. By an odd chance, Mrs. Fanning, two days before had located the same flat, unknown to her husband. Trolley-car gongs, the moving-picture theatre on the next street, the delicatessen half-way down the block—Heaven held no more!

So—

Mr. Fanning took a step forward. Mrs. Fanning's eyes opened wide.

Mrs. Whiggin-Plipp was still speaking.

"'Time to foreclose,' I said to myself, 'and I'll run over and tell the Fannings I'm going to do it.' I'm going to foreclose the mortgage, Mr. Fanning."

Mr. Fanning took another step forward and grasped Mrs. Whiggin-Plipp's hand. He shook it warmly and enthusiastically.

"My dear, dear, dear Mrs. Whiggin-Plipp!" he exclaimed, joyfully.

"Oh, my dear Mrs. Whiggin-Plipp!" cried Mrs. Fanning.

"I try to be a good neighbor," said the Whiggin-Plipp, "but when it is time to foreclose I do it. And now is the time."

"There never was a better," said Mr. Fanning, eagerly.

"Humph!" said the Whiggin-Plipp. "We Whiggins settled here in 1689, and we have been foreclosing ever since."

Meat

BY GEORGE ALLAN ENGLAND

Author of "Don't You Remember," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY ROBERT W. AMICK

SO we—aoh—so I brought him in on my howdah, to Bhagalpur," concluded Colonel Fitzhugh McBride, of His Majesty's Own Punjabi Lancers, "and the bally natives made a tremendous *pooja* and banged drums and offered up rice and melted butter and generally became extravagant. Most extrawdin'ry! That was the end of the big cat. He'd killed some fifty of the blooming bouncers and eaten most of them. Astonishing record; quite incredible! But my .57 express stopped him. No, you may tramp the world straight over, gentlemen, but you'll jolly well find nothing to equal Tiger!"

Came a brief pause, while ice clinked in glasses on the smoke-room table, the North Atlantic gale zoo-oo-ooned among the *Hanseatica's* stays, and the rudder-chains creaked uneasily. From the opposite corner rose an ivory click of poker-chips and a thump of pasteboards flung with quite unnecessary force upon the baize. The linen-coated steward yawned as he glanced for the hundredth time at the chronometer above the stairway.

Then the liner wriggled, lurched and slid with a bump down the flank of a solid roller. And Wilson Bates, reaching for the matches, remarked:

"That's your say, is it? Kitty's got 'em all skun?"

The Briton eyed him through his monocle, then nodded gravely:

"If your—oah—your meaning," he replied, "is that the Royal Bengal tiger surpasses any other meat in the world, for hunting, yes."

Wertheimer stirred and blinked. Behind his thick-lensed glasses his eyes looked very mild and brown and peaceable.

"I disagree," he remarked gently. "Disagree, absolutely!"

"Eh?" exclaimed the colonel, piqued. It is not nice, now is it, to have a mere commercial traveler question one's prestige as a hunter and seek to discredit one's opinion? "Eh? How so?"

"How so? Vell, I know an animal as is much better hunting-meat, ten times better, one hundert, as any tiger in India or out."

"Come, come, now, Wertheimer," I interposed. "I didn't know you were a hunter—for anything but business!"

"I aint."

The little German took another sip of Bass.

"My word, but in that case," puffed the colonel, "on what authority do you speak, sir?"

"On the authority off what I haf myself seen. Yes, because I haf one time known about the finish of a much bigger hunt as tigers. Tiger-meat? *Pfui!*"

"What game?" demanded Bates, beginning to inhale his smoke in that detestable manner which always meant he was getting interested. "What game?"

"*Man!*" answered Wertheimer.

II

And then he told us.

"Yes," he began, very softly indeed, "when you talk of meat as excites the nerfs, makes the heart hammer and the sweat trickle out, and gets on the mind—hunting as drives a hunter round and round the world to get what he's after, Man is the game of games, the meat of meats. So.

"Rawson was my friend. He is now,

to-day. I call him Rawson because it aint his name. Quiet and gentle, a broker in those times, and interested in botany. He would not hurt so much as one fly—but he hunted Man. Three year he hunted. One, two, three, *ach*, yes!" On his pudgy fingers the drummer counted off the time.

"Why? I tell you. He hunt a man called—vell, no matter—called Schmidt. Schmidt will do for a name. He vant Schmidt to be dead, very much dead. Entirely. But not by proxy. Not to haf him die mit diseases and accidents. No. Mit his own two hands he vant to strangulate Schmidt, so! Yes, he vant to *feel* him die, in his fingers! Yes, so vas his vish."

"Pious ambition for a broking gentleman," admiringly murmured Wilson Bates, through his smoke. "Very appropriate for a lover of botany, nature-student and all that. Grand!"

"*Ach*, yes, quite so, vas it not? Because, you see, Schmidt vas a Russian, and—vell—"

"Woman in the case, Heinrich?"

The German nodded.

"But of that," added he, "ve say nothing. Let it pass, entirely. Some things you can't talk about. All vat matter is, that Rawson hunt Schmidt, and Schmidt, having the heart of a rabbit in spite of his black viskers and fat neck, he run away. Run eferywhere. Three year. So.

"Rawson used to be a good all-round athlete, one time. Schmidt vas strong, too, all except in the heart. I think his muscles vas even more strong as Rawson's; but still, Rawson know if he can *get* him, he can strangulate him, in spite of Schmidt's being a crackingjack pistol-shot, like you call it—much better shot as Rawson, who could shoot only so-so, like you, or me, or the Colonel here."

Wertheimer nodded at Fitzhugh McBride, who reddened very much about the gills and opened his mustached lips to speak, then closed them with a snap.

"Vell, so the hunting begin. Rawson, he gif notice to Schmidt he vill not try to shoot him. It was too good, shooting vas, even mit dum-dum bullets. And as

for getting shot, himself, he say he haf no timidity. No; he look out for *that*. He promise to take Schmidt some night, some dark night, ven he think himself most safe, and squeeze his neck. So Schmidt's nerfs get bad, very bad, and he go avay quick. Quick.

"Now, I aint a gazetteer, gentlemen, and I vont try to tell you all the places Schmidt run to, to lose Rawson. But in a general vay the hunt go westward, efer westward.

"Schmidt bury himself in Circle City; but comes a letter and it says Rawson vill be soon on hand. So Schmidt go right over to Shanghai. Again, pretty soon, a cable-despatch arrive, saying: 'I know. I come.' From Shanghai, Schmidt beat it to Achin, a lost place on the north-west tip of Sumatra. Dis time he lie in peace and hope about a month; but at last a coolie visper in his ear a message he say he get from a white man in Batavia. And Schmidt, he skip on the next steamer, not knowing where it is bound for and not caring at all."

Wertheimer finished his ale and thought a minute, then continued, even more gently than before:

"Rawson, you see, did not vant to get him too quick. It vould haf spoiled the fun of the hunting. No. He prefer to wear Schmidt down, and file his nerfs to a leetle thin wire, and then break that wire, yes? And reduce him to not sleeping, not eating, not knowing what night the end might come. *Ach*, some hunting, vat? So!"

"You bet!" snuffed Bates, striking another match. At the card-table, the game had been suspended. The poker-players were listening, now. Even the steward had forgotten to be bored. Under the bright, white glare of the incandescents in the coffered ceiling, Wertheimer's face wrinkled into a faint smile. On his nose he adjusted his glasses carefully. We waited.

"Schmidt, sweating blood, his hand losing its cunning, ducks off the steamer at Rangoon. Just where he go, for a year after, it vould be hard to trace on the map. He take a *kiràn*, a river-boat, up-country. It is a big placè, Burmah.



"A coolie visper in his ear a message he get from a white man, in Batavia"

Also, easy to get lost in. But Rawson, he neffer lose him for very long. Wherever the Russian, claiming to be a naturalist, go to, Rawson, who say he is a tourist, keep finding him. A pretty game—and long, long. *Ach*, so!

"Schmidt, he double on his track and get into Borneo. Yes, he know about the head-hunters, and so on; but he prefer them to Rawson. It is nicer to haf the head flop right off, zip! mit one good cut, as to haf it twisted slow. Yes? *Gewiss!* So he go to Borneo.

"After all, Schmidt is not so much a coward. He must haf been as brave as the average man, at times—like you, or me, or the Colonel here." Wertheimer glanced shrewdly at the puffy, pompous face of His Majesty's Own Punjabi Lancer. "But he vant to die in the daylight, mit a good chance for a fight. He would haf given effery dollar vat he got—and he was rich, too—for a stand-up mit Rawson, sword to sword, gun to gun, hatchet to hatchet, any old vay, even mit the bare claws, and settle it so. But—not so did Rawson desire. And the hunt go on.

"Vell, I make it short, gentlemen. Rawson hunt him through India, into Afghanistan, across Persia and Arabia and der Desert of El Khali into Yemen. There, at Mokha, the two men is now only about a fortnight apart. Schmidt is clever, very. Instead of running down the east coast of Africa, like anybody would, he turn again, now, toward civilization and try to make his get-away through Port Said and so to Gibraltar and home to New York. He leave fake news to throw Rawson off the trail and send him to Zanzibar; but when Schmidt reach Gib., a wireless tell him Rawson is at Naples and has a pressing business mit him—very pressing—in the neck-wear line. And Schmidt does not even change his ticket. He go ashore and let the steamer sail away mitout him; and then he stow away on a British collier bound for Cape Town.

"I guess the captain work him the limit, ven he find him aboard, for anyvay Schmidt get sick before Table Mountain rise up out of the horizon.

And typhoid set in. So he stay in the Prince Albert Hospital, there, a long time. Sick! *Ach*, extremely so!

"But ven he get better, comes a Kafir mit a note, as he sit trying to breathe on the parade-ground at Fort Nockle, looking across Table Bay at Robben Island. And der note say only: 'Move!'"

Wertheimer peered earnestly into his stein. I beckoned the steward. When this indispensable functionary had done his duty like a good man and true, Wertheimer wiped his lips on the back of his hand, and took a deep breath.

"So he moved again?" queried Wilson.

"Yes. Once more he double on his tracks. Instead of keeping round towards Natal and Delagoa Bay, he change his name again for the hundredth time and jump out on one of the water-steamers plying between Cape Town and Swakopmund, German Sout'-west Africa."

"Water-steamers?"

"To carry water, in tanks, of course. Only one river in the whole country, der Kuisseb, and it's salt. All the rest, only dry river-beds—*wadys*. Desert, sand, salt-beds, ashes of life, mountains like red-hot glass, that's all, clean from Damaraland, to Great Namaqualand. The last place Gott make—and Gott forget it, effer since."

"But," asked I, "what could Schmidt possibly do there? Any towns? Any place to live?"

"Two white settlements. Two, at Wal-fisch Bay. And one a couple o' hundred miles up-country, in the Hinterland—Windhoek, its name is. Germans, efferybody. Military and penal colony. That is to say—Hell. The very last place at the end of the whole, wide world. If such a thing is possible as to bury a man alive, it would be at Windhoek. Schmidt make up his mind it vill be the last stand. Beyond Windhoek he vill not go. Whateffer happen, no further, yet."

"Aoh—did he?" drawled the colonel, tugging at his long mustaches.

"Vait. I tell you, soon." And Wertheimer drained his ale, then settled down for the last lap of his singular narrative.

III

"Now, you understand," said he, his voice growing subtly deeper while outside the winds made wanton music, "now you know, as I haf said before, if there is any such place as Hell, it must be just like the Hinterland of German Sout'-west Africa.

"No trees, no flowers, gentlemen; no jungle; nodding. And all the time, dust-storms and whirlwinds of sand from the baked plains. And water brought in leetle barrels, six marks for one barrel. No baths, vot? Forty soldiers once die there in one month, out of sixty. And as for the convicts—Gott knows, maybe. Enteric fever, and zymotic, and so on. Also they hang the water up in a slimy canvas bag, to cool it. Not one white woman there, not one. Nice, aint it—for a man like Schmidt?

"Nobody go in the sun, between nine and five. If they go, it burn all the skin off, wherever it touch. What vork is done, hauling up supplies to the troops und convicts, mit twenty donkeys and two Kafirs on every vagon, comes by night—by the short, hot night, so hot you can't sleep anyhow."

"Say, how on earth did *you* ever happen to blow into such a punk joint?" suddenly exclaimed Bates.

The little traveler squinted at him.

"Dat," he answered, "is my business—and the Company's."

Bates nibbled his lip. The story continued:

"Yes, it was Hell, all right. No birds, no life, only sometimes a starved lion, and the camels run by imported Arabians for the transport-trains up-country. Germans can't do nodding mit camels, gentlemen. No white man can do it. The camel balk, and he veep, and he die, and he get up wrong end first und throw you ten feet away and—but no matter. Not even the camel can live there naturally. Nodding lives, but only a kind of horny bug called *spinnekops*. Ven he bite you, which he always do if he possibly can, it is good if you haf your vill already made—because you cannot make it at all, *after* the bite. Also, you

turn blackish, which is unpleasant, and you get buried at vunce, on account of der climate.

"You haf to eat horse-meat, while alive; and nodding grow on those mountains of flint but just thorn-bushes, exactly the same like papers of long hat-pins, mit niggers hiding behind it. You cannot go through, but the niggers can, easy. *Ach*, yes."

"So, then," I asked, "the country's really inhabited, after all?"

"Yes, if you be so foolish as to think der Hereros, black and yellow, and able to drink alkali water, haf human souls. They lay right in der bush, behind rocks, and catch the Germans and take away their rifles. Sometimes they take away field-guns, too. Use 'em? You bet they use 'em, all right, ven they got 'em! They sometimes catch some missionaries, sometimes some soldiers, and gif them to the women. Also the Herero women haf bad manners. They cut up white men by leetle inches, mit stone knives. That is why at Swakopmund you vill see hunderts of Herero women kept in a thorn-bush kraal, guarded by soldiers and made to vork hard, mit whips, and a dozen or two dying effery day. Good feeling on both sides, vat? Good ground for der missionaries. And ven a punishing expedition chases the free Hereros in the mountains, they push down big rocks on the troops and smear 'em—flat.

"Nice boys, the Hereros, mit thin cheeks and high face-bones, and a language all clicks mit the tongue. Also, they shoot you mit a blowing-tube and darts, or mit a *pfeil und bogen*—a bow and arrows, eh?—having poison arrows, so if you get even one leetle scratch, you say your prayers—if you got any to say, which mostly you aint. Because it can do no good, there. Because it is too far to make up any connection mit, from anywhere.

"Vell, such is the place where Schmidt at last take refuge. He think, now, he is surely safe. For how can Rawson go there and find him? Who effer hear of Swakopmund? How can Rawson track him? And also, moreover, Schmidt don't

stay on the coast. No, he trek mit a camel train, two hundred miles inland from Walfisch Bay, to Windhoek, which is on der east slope off the mountains, beyond which is nodding but one thousand miles of sand, white-hot—Bechuanaland and der Kalahari Desert. It is marked 'Unexplored' on the maps, and not even a camel crosses it. Because camels must drink every eight days, and there is no water at all—only here, there, a leetle *vlei*, a salt-spring, you understand. So, Windhoek is the end of the world.

"And Schmidt, he expect to curry favor mit the officers and to stay there one year, two year maybe, then slip out again and be free—perhaps. But it is not to be. No. Not at all."

He paused, seemingly in thought. Then he passed a hand over his eyes, and slowly said:

"Now, gentlemen, I explain you the finish. And ven I get through, I ask the Colonel, here, one question: Only one."

"Aoh, yes?" murmured Fitzhugh McBride, while Bates forgot to smoke, and at the table in the other corner a thick silence reigned.

IV

"Schmidt stay at Windhoek, pretending to collect *spinnkops*, one week. Then comes an Arabian mit a camel by his tent, and hand to him a letter. It say—I say—well, I show you, here, myself."

Wertheimer produced from an inner pocket a bill-fold, puffy and well-worn. He opened it, while we all stared. From one compartment he extracted a much-creased bit of paper, cheap, blue-lined and dirty, with a singular brown stain blotching one corner.

This he spread flat upon the table. Eagerly I read, in a cramped hand, German words which said:

Go on, further still. This is the last week. The coast trail is covered. You are penned. Strike east. Go!

With a shiver, Bates broke out:

"But—but how on earth did—you—"

"Did I get it?" smiled the German.

"Ach! Is not that an interesting ques-

tion, though? No, it was not given to me. But wait, wait—soon you understand all, *maybe*."

"Blood?" I queried, tapping the stain.

He nodded; then, refolding the paper, he put it back in his pocket. After a moment's pause he went on:

"So Schmidt, he move. He try for one day, for two days, to stand his ground and meet it among men; but his nerf is not good any more. So he go—go light. Hoping, of course, to swing back around to the south through the Auas Mountains and maybe reach Port Ilheo and get away to the sea in a canoe, and try to be picked up by a steamer. It is a slim chance, but it is better as sitting still and not daring ever to sleep—waiting for hands to get you by der neck, at night, and squeeze.

"Rawson, he follow. By the tracks in der sand, he come after, by the tracks in the burning sand. One day behind, he trek. Schmidt, he hurt his left foot, twisting it in some rocks. He limp, and Rawson see he limp, by the tracks. And Rawson smile.

"So, on the second day out from Windhoek, Rawson he find Schmidt."

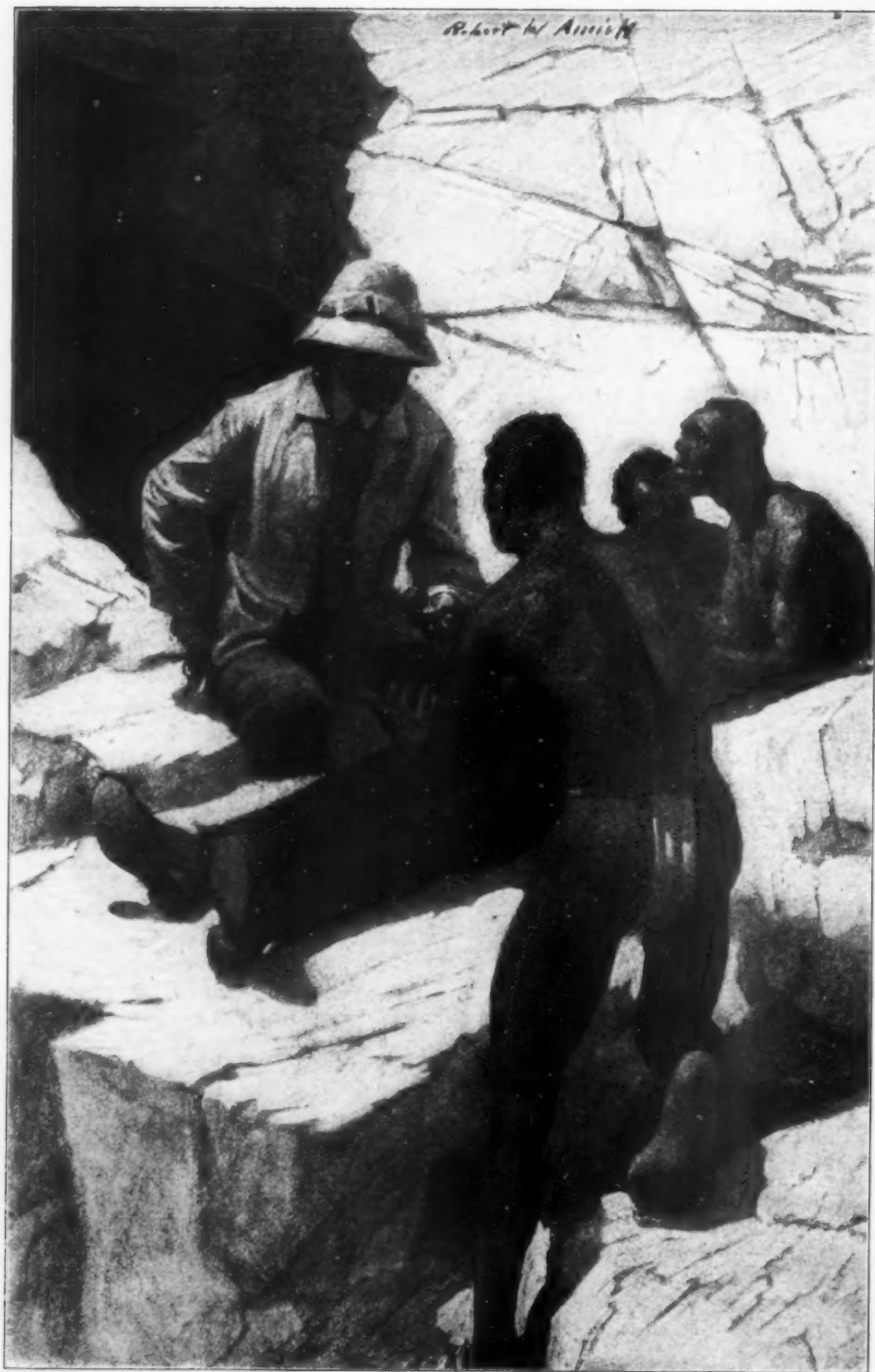
Another long pause.

"Well?" breathed I.

"He find him, but not like he hope. No; he come across him in a leetle bush place, a ravine, on the other side off a *kopje*.

"Schmidt, he is laying on the rocks. And all around, squatting on their hams, is five Hereros. And in Schmidt is sticking the poison arrows and darts. The Hereros is taking off his watch and money and clothes—efferything vat he got. Und he is dead. Quite so.

"Vell, when Rawson see it, he grow sick and almost fainting, and his heart die. He yell. The Hereros, scared, jump up and run off in der bush. In one minute, not a Herero you can see. Rawson, he stumble to the body, and he weep. He look at the neck, and at the black beard; he observe der face, which have suffered much, but not yet enough. He see the eyes, which is half-closed—peaceful. He know Schmidt die quite sudden, mit the *curaré* quick poison, and not have



"All the time he is getting the revolver right where he want it"

suffered long. And so he weep, bitter, bitter. Three years' work, such work, gentlemen, and get cheated at last—would you not weep, also?"

"Go on! What then!" snapped Bates.

"Then? *Ach*, then, Rawson, he sit down. He wait. For he know the Hereros aint gone far away. He know they hide in the bush and rocks, and maybe shoot him, too. So he tie up his handkerchief on a branch of the thorn-tree, and hold it up. And loud he talk to them and tell them they haf kill his enemy, and say he is exceedingly grateful, all in German. They know a leetle German. So after a long time, they creep back again.

"Yes, after a while, all five of them come back. And they squat around and wait for the presents. And Rawson he gif them things. Much money, and tobacco, and two pipes, and knives and—all vot he got—except the automatic Browning revolver.

"No, he keep the revolver. And all the time he is giving the presents and making the thankful talk, he is getting the revolver right where he want it. It has six shots in it. Also, it shoots very fast.

"So, just at the right minute, he let it go, and he shoot all of the Hereros. Yes, *bing! bing! bing! bing! bing!* Five times, right close up, blank-point. So they all fall over. Yes, before they can do anything, they can't do nodding. And one shot is left. Rawson, he use that one shot, also."

"How?" demanded I, aghast. "For Heaven's sake, he didn't—"

Wertheimer smiled.

"No," he made answer. "There is still one more man alive there, remember."

"You mean—?"

"Of course. He put the Browning by his own head. He is cheated so he can't stand it. *Bing!* He fall. He tip over among the Hereros, right beside Schmidt. But he is not dead, yet."

"Not dead?"

"No. His hand shake, mit the excitement. And his skull, his frontal bones, is thick. *Ach*, very. So the bullet does not go all through, but shoot off some-

where else, in the desert. So, after two days more, some soldiers find him.

"And he tell how braf he and the odder man fight the Hereros and how they kill five and the rest run away. And his story go. They don't suspect nodding. So the soldiers leave the Hereros to dry up on the rocks, but they bury Schmidt, right there, black viskers und all. Then they pile a big lot of rocks on him. And he is there—now. So.

"And Rawson, he go away from there mit the soldiers carrying him, and he still alive. That is about der finish of the story, gentlemen."

"But—how the devil do *you* happen to know all this?" exclaimed the Punjabi Lancer. "Deuced odd, y'know, and—aoh—most extrawd'niry."

"You answer my question, Colonel, if I answer yours?"

"Indeed I will!"

"All right. How I know all this? Look!"

With his pudgy hand Wertheimer pushed back the curling hair from his right temple.

There, clearly standing out against the brownish-yellow skin, burned an ugly, jagged weal.

"Now, Colonel, *my* question, please?"

"Aoh—?"

"Did you effer know a man to hunt a tiger three year, and then kill five men because they get to it first, and then try to shoot himself fer the same reason, also? No? All right. For excitement, and sweat, and the heart-beatings and the racking of the soul, it is *not*, then, the biggest hunting-meat, tiger aint. And as I say before, Man *is*. Good-night!"

The little German got up, yawned noisily, and shuffled away down the stairs to his cabin.

In the silence that followed, I went out on deck, out on the cold, clean, dark and windswept deck. Refreshing was the salt drive of the gale; and very good to me the vague white seeth of foam, astern, as for a while I stood beside the rail and thought long thoughts and gazed upon the mystery of night, of sea, and of the passionless stars.



Jim

Beacons of the Better Way

BY FLORENCE WOOLSTON

Author of "Mamie's White Feather," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY ROLLIN CRAMPTON

THERE was great agitation in Pearl Alley on the day that Miss Evelyn Wilde appeared. Mrs. Schwind and Mrs. Middleton, who as usual were hanging over the window-sill watching the sights, were the first to descry the stranger.

"Look! Look!" exclaimed Mrs. Schwind eagerly. "There goes a foreign lady in Herman Miller's cottage. I bet it's rented. Aint she a queer looker in that wrapper!"

Mrs. Middleton leaned out as far as safety would permit.

"Off the circus!" The pronunciamento was indisputable. "I seen one of them

in the parade. Queen of the Eyegyptian Isles."

It was small wonder that the newcomer attracted the attention of the Alley at once. She was a tiny little woman with a bird-like hop, and her short, white robe of Greek design and sandals strapped over bare feet, gave her a classic appearance, varied slightly by a Roman toga of blue velvet and an American sailor hat.

"She's movin' in. There's an express team," continued Mrs. Schwind. "Say, will you catch on to them boxes!"

Mrs. Middleton again bent forward

and observed a wagon load of wooden boxes, a large loom and a small trunk.

"Now what do you think of that!" she said.

The next day, curiosity was again stimulated to a pitch of excitement when an artistically embellished sign was suspended from the upper windows of the cottage:

PIERCE BEACON GARRET
NUMBER ONE

Miss Evelyn Wilde, the new resident, was a reformer, a disciple of the Better Way. Before she persuaded the Honorable Joseph Pierce to finance her philosophy, she was a drudging school teacher. Always, however, while her pupils were bounding Australia, wrestling with fractions and reciting colonial wars, her thoughts were upon the soul and its cultivation. After long study she evolved a theory of right living which, stripped of its accessories, was simply this: Achieve contentment by forgetting things as they are and brooding continually on things as they ought to be.

Mr. Pierce, one of the first converts, immediately contributed a generous sum for the spread of the new idea. Having amassed a large fortune by means of things as they are, he was only too eager to spend it to create a condition of things as they ought to be, stipulating only that his name be in some way connected with the enterprise.

Accordingly, Miss Wilde planned a series of spiritual light-houses where self-sacrificing women like herself might help Mr. Pierce rid himself of the burden of riches and incidentally convert the masses to the Better Way. She reasoned wisely that the poor were more likely to need a gospel of contentment than the rich; moreover, their circumstances would enable them to achieve the simple life quite easily. Although Pearl Alley was already supplied with a social settlement, a charity organization society, two mission churches and a station of the salvation army, she felt that more uplift was needed.

After three weeks of strenuous activity within the garret, the Beaconess of

the Better Way emerged from her retreat, the light-house ready for inspection and the faith for disciples. It was a warm spring morning and she glanced around the cottage yard, hoping to see a stray daffodil or tulip. The soft west wind and the earthy smell of the season made her rejoice that she was alive and had a mission. She looked down the dingy street with its littered side-walks and overflowing ash barrels. Tired, frowsy women were gossiping in doorways and rocking babies in their arms as if perpetual motion would stop their cries. My Lady of Poverty, grim, gray and stern, was patron saint of the Alley.

"How beautiful," thought Miss Wilde, "that my cottage with its garden and maple tree is here for them all to enjoy. Once they learn to think so, it is as much theirs as if they really possessed it." Stopping to gaze into a great brown puddle which reflected in somber tones the brilliance of the sky, she murmured:

But in the mud and scum of things,
There, alway, alway something sings.

Glancing up, she saw Mrs. Schwind and Mrs. Middleton hanging out over the window and as they looked friendly she decided to approach them first. They saw her enter the hall, but there was hardly time to exchange whispers of conjecture before she knocked at the door. Mrs. Middleton opened it cautiously.

"How do you do!" Miss Wilde extended a hand in cordial greeting. "I'm your new neighbor and I called to invite you to visit Pierce Beacon Garret Number One. It's different from ordinary houses and I thought you would be interested to see it."

Mrs. Middleton hesitated a moment, during which curiosity got the better of dignity. "Sure," she answered. "We'll join. How much is it?"

Miss Wilde was obviously hurt by such an open allusion to money—which she considered the most vulgar thing on earth.

"It will cost you nothing. It's my own

house—I've come down here to live with you all."

"Are you a sociable settlement?" Mrs. Schwind was peeking over Mrs. Middleton's shoulder.

"No, indeed," protested Miss Wilde. "Settlements mix up in neighborhood affairs. I believe that all is right with the world if you only think so. The Garret is a Beacon to light you to the Better Way, not an institution to stir you up."

Somewhat mystified, Mrs. Schwind and Mrs. Middleton crossed the street and entered Herman's cottage. When Miss Wilde proudly opened the door of the upper room there was a gasp of surprise and a chorus of admiration. Wonders had indeed been achieved. The walls were painted a warm yellow and flowered curtains hung at the windows. In the largest space at the front of the room hung a copy of the Sistine Madonna and a stand directly beneath upheld two brass candlesticks. A fierce plaster lion contributed a masculine element to the otherwise maidenly chamber.

"Catholic," whispered Mrs. Middleton at the first opportunity, pointing to the Madonna and the candles.

In the corner was a box couch, draped with yellow material; in the center of the room was an inverted box, likewise trimmed, and there were several chairs, all fashioned from boxes nailed together and upholstered in red.

"You see," began Miss Wilde, after her guests were seated somewhat nervously on the box chairs, "this garret is furnished entirely by boxes. I don't believe in ordinary furniture—it's not simple enough. Plain, ordinary packing boxes are cheaper than regular furniture and more practical for poor people. Besides, there is great spiritual development from working with the hands."

"Aint boxes expensive?" ventured Mrs. Schwind timidly, her eye resting upon the couch. "Where could you buy such a big box as that there one?"

Miss Wilde looked slightly embarrassed. "That—er, oh—that *was* a trifle more expensive than the others. You see, to carry out my idea, I wanted the garret entirely furnished in boxes, and it was

hard to find one big enough for a couch. That—er—er—was a coffin box! But all the others were cheap enough to make up for it."

"How much was the drapes?"—Mrs. Middleton was of a practical turn of mind. "Figured patterns like that is a quarter a yard down to Ebers."

"That was twenty-five, too, but it only required six yards to upholster the table. The box was thirty cents, the brass tacks, twenty. Where could you find such a nice table as that for \$2.00?"

"Down to Bernstein's basement," put in Mrs. Schwind, "they've got nice ones for \$1.50, all painted white." But Miss Wilde turned their attention to the loom, where she was weaving a rag carpet.

"I could show you how to make a nice rug from the children's old dresses. You tear the pieces in strips and you dye them any color you like. It's a practical way to use the left-overs."

"They aint never no left-overs in my tribe," confessed Mrs. Schwind. "I've got twelve kids and what one gits too big for, t'other takes."

"Well, maybe we'd better start with something else. How would you like to have a club, just you two, and learn to make furniture out of boxes? We'll call it 'The Club of the Better Way' and you'll be Beacons to light the rest of the Alley, after you learn."

The visitors accepted with alacrity and promised to call the following day. Mrs. Middleton decided to make a center table and Mrs. Schwind thought that a crib for little Tom Murphy, Jr., would be a practical and beautiful addition to the kitchen.

The first meeting was given over to the preliminaries of scraping and sandpapering. "Of course," said Miss Wilde, "many like the severe mission style, and we could paint the crib and leave it plain. Somehow, I like the idea of a baby lying amid dainty ruffles. Boys call for pink and I think that a flounce of white chintz with pink roses would be pretty. We could line the box with pink satin and have blankets with pink borders. Don't you think that would be effective?"

"Sure." Mrs. Schwind's eyes were bright with anticipation. "It would be grand, but I couldn't get it this week. Henry Morton had new shoes, and Mary wants to make her first communion."

"Oh, that's all right. I can easily help you out. Mr. Pierce, who founded this garret, gave me money to spread our ideas of simple furniture, and I'll buy the trimmings for you."

As the days passed, Mrs. Schwind became more and more engrossed in the Club of the Better Way. She was proud of her title of Beacon and enjoyed the ceremonies devised by Miss Wilde, which combined the features of a Lodge and college fraternity. Daily meetings at the garret extended gradually from one to several hours. Miss Wilde was not satisfied with the colors available in the stores, and insisted upon dyeing the necessary draperies. Mrs.

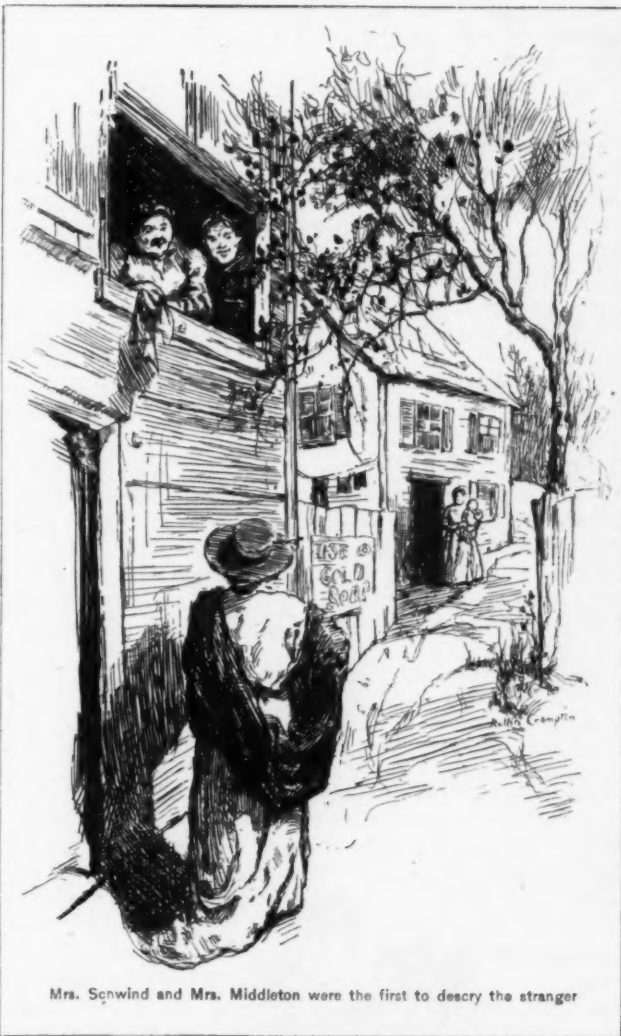
Middleton's table was to be upholstered in crêpe and all the crinkles were put in by hand, for the sake of development.

Mrs. Schwind at last bore the crib home and the family gathered about with wide-eyed admiration.

"Ma," begged Royal, who at night occupied an ironing board stretched across two chairs. "Can I get a bed, after the baby?"

"Sure. I'll make beds for the whole of youse, all in different colors."

Jim whistled when he saw it. "Gosh, it's a beaut, all right. Aint it small?"



Mrs. Schwind and Mrs. Middleton were the first to descry the stranger

"It was the biggest I darst buy. He'll fit all right, only he gits a bath first. Helene, find the towel."

Thomas Murphy endured an unusually thorough ablution without the usual protests, for he realized that this was his hour. There was a moment of expectant silence as his mother finally laid him on the pink mattress, and then a prolonged "Oh" from the entire family as the truth burst upon them. Thomas was an inch too long for his crib.

"You could fold his legs under him," suggested Helene.

"No sir-ee!" Jim was emphatic. "No bow-legs in this tribe, not if I see them first."

Mrs. Schwind struggled to hide her disappointment. "It aint no good to fuss. There can't nothin' be done with it as a bed, unless we get a smaller baby. It's too big for a work basket and too fancy for food. I guess I'll turn it upside down and use it for a hassock. They're real stylish now, and I can use the blanket in the go-cart."

The crib was followed by two chairs and a book-case. To be sure, the Schwinds had no books, but the case made a useful receptacle for pots and pans and gave an air of distinction to the room, with its hangings of blue denim stenciled in green. Mrs. Schwind found the art work rather laborious, but Miss Wilde assured her that she could never be a full-fledged Beacon until she had mastered all the Better Ways.

After the first interest of novelty,

Jim was outspoken in his dislike of the new order. The kitchen was crowded and the new articles were always in his way.

"I'd have moved to Hoboken if I'd knowed that there hair-pin with the drapes was movin' in here," he declared. "She's baiting you on, Ma. You'd better look out. It's a slick game. What's a Beacon Garret for, anyway?"

"I don't know for sure," admitted the Lady Beacon Vice-President. "She says she'll lead us from boxes up to the higher life and show us how to furnish cheap and fancy."

"Umph. It's pay cash or C.O.D., ih biz. When you git all the furniture there'll be something doing or I'll eat my hat. Watch out, old girl."

"Don't worry. Nobody'll get anything on me. I've stood a 'good deal for religion—and things. Say, wouldn't it be grand to move and have a parlor. I could gradual make a sofa and chairs

—it would be swell all in turkey-red with red peonies on green paper."

Not long after, when Mrs. Schwind and Mrs. Middleton were busily engaged in weaving rag rugs, Miss Wilde surprised them by beginning abruptly:

"Do you know that everyone in the Alley eats too much? Ever since I've lived down here among you I've noticed that an enormous amount of food is eaten every day. The money wasted for meat alone, is simply scandalous."

"I aint never noticed that!" Mrs. Schwind felt obliged to defend her neighbors. "I thought it was just the opposite with food so high. I'm sure my family aint never satisfied."



"You may have noticed that I do not dress as others do"



"They're not satisfied because they're used to stuffing themselves. They're accustomed to heavy, filling things."

Mrs. Schwind looked guilty and Mrs. Middleton hastened to the rescue. "Not in her family, they aint. When there's so many kids as she's got, food aint never too plentiful. Do you think hearty food is bad for folks?"

"It is not only bad for people"—Miss Wilde crossed the room and took her place under the Sistine Madonna, which served as a sort of shrine of The Better Way—"but it stifles thought and checks the higher life. Did you ever see a great fat man eat a six-course dinner? He begins greedily and devours soup, fish, meats, entrée, salad, pie, crackers, cheese and fruit. Half way through the meal he is satisfied, but he continues to eat just because he has formed the habit. Then he sits down—soggy, sleepy, contented. Do you believe that a man like that has an active soul? Have you not been disheartened to realize that of such is the Brotherhood of Man?"

Neither Mrs. Schwind nor Mrs. Middleton had ever witnessed such a spectacle or experienced a six-course dinner and both felt that the menu outlined by Miss Wilde sounded appetizing. But they were too completely under the spell of the Garret to question their leader's statements.

"Now look at me," commanded Miss Wilde. "I am well nourished and strong and I do not find it necessary to make a god of food. I eat, of course, but only to live. At night I take a few crackers and nuts and without the bother of setting a table or cooking. I sit in my garret window and watch the stars come out, thinking of the beautiful sky instead of the meal I am having. Suffragists think that voting will emancipate women, but it will not, until we have evolved a race that has no need of food. In the meantime, women who cook the least, will be the most emancipated. Would you like to be free from the tyranny of three meals a day?"

Mrs. Schwind nodded an emphatic

assent. "You bet I'd relish the chanst to eat off some one else for a while. I get that sick of my own food!"

"This will not be your own food. There is only one proper diet." Miss Wilde spoke so positively that she convinced her hearers. "Cooked foods are poison to the system; meat is suicidal. Raw food is not only more healthful, but it promotes the higher life. Would you like to learn food preparation in the Better Way?"

"I'd be glad to learn," condescended Mrs. Middleton. "I aint sure that I can change his taste, but I'm willing to try."

Miss Wilde removed the screen from her kitchenette. On the table lay two carrots, a head of lettuce and a bottle of olive oil.

"I'll show you how to prepare carrots, first. They are nutritious and cheap and their color blends beautifully with lettuce."

"Aint oil expensive?" ventured Mrs. Schwind.

"No more so than meat and fish and other soul-stifling stuff that you buy ordinarily. Mr. Pierce, who founded this garret, has given me parchment cook-books for you both. They were very expensive, but he is willing to make every sacrifice to spread our idea of simple eating. After each lesson we'll illuminate the recipes in water-colors. For instance, the heading of the page of onion menus will be a hand-painted onion; a squash will be on the next page; then oranges and bananas and so on. In this way, food preparation will become an art."

Both Beacons of the Better Way responded heartily to the new idea. Mrs. Middleton, who was a social leader in the Alley, had visions of entire days free from housekeeping, with endless opportunities for visiting and club meetings. Mrs. Schwind, struggling to bring up a large family on a small income, felt that at last a time of luxury was approaching. Eating always made such inroads on the family purse.

"No more tea and pan-cakes and chuck and wieners," she announced to

the family one evening. "Miss Wilde is showing me the simple food and tomorrow I'm buying oil and crackers. I'll make youse a grand salad, bananas and parsnips and other fruits. You've always eat too much for your own good. I've heard that the children will take education better if they aint over-stuffed with hearty meals."

Jim grunted contemptuously. "When did you ever see this family full up? I aint never seen 'em satisfied yet—growing kids always has the open face. What's the harm of eating?"

"It aint so much the harm it does as the harm it might do. Hearty food stops the soul from thinking and women are slaves to the cook-stoves in the Alley. Besides if we all eat simple, I'd git more time."

Jim looked at her in astonishment. "Time for what, Ma? Women don't need time for nothin' special. Don't it keep you busy to spend my wages and look out for the family?"

"We wont argue now." Mrs. Schwind felt a storm brewing. "If you don't like the new way, we can always change back."

"I don't like the new way," pursued Jim. "That there Beaconsess is a bad inflorence on you—to my mind she aint in it with them settlement girls."

"She's different. I think she's more classy, not bein' interested in the common. She's all for the soul and taking care of it."

Jim smiled sarcastically. "She'd better keep her soul in a bird-cage or it'll get away on her."

Mrs. Schwind did not reply. Miss Wilde's teachings had the charm of novelty, and both Beacons enjoyed the frequent and generous contributions made by Mr. Pierce for the spread of the faith.

The children were pleased with the new diet, and regarded each meal as a voyage of discovery. Jim persistently objected to the proper preparation of food and went over to Tom Murphy's saloon directly after supper to take advantage of the free-lunch counter. Miss Wilde told her pupils that they must be patient



if their husbands were slow to adapt themselves to the Better Way. Men, she assured them, were naturally like animals and enjoyed the old-fashioned, soul-deadening way of living.

"One more step in the order of Beaconhood," she announced one day, "and then we'll have your graduation and take in new members. Of course you'll continue with me as demonstrators and assist in the initiation of new Beacons."

"What do we learn next?" Mrs. Schwind was plainly worried. "The food aint takin' so good as the furniture done."

Miss Wilde stationed herself beneath the Sistine Madonna, for she preferred that setting when preaching.

"You may have noticed," she began

impressively, "that I do not dress as others do."

"You wear wrappers and bare legs and slippers," Mrs. Middleton hastened to reply.

"I suppose it does seem that way to you. In reality I'm following the Greek idea of dress. The flowing robe is not only beautiful, but comfortable and simple. The sandals—well, do you know that verse in the Bible, 'How beautiful are the feet of those that bring good tidings?' We must learn not to blush at nature. Our next step in the Better Way is to reform dress in the Alley."

Mrs. Schwind gasped. "Have I got to dress like you? It's all right for you and Mis' Middleton, both bein' thin, but I'm fat. Jim would call the Board of

Health if he seen me in your clothes. It will make lots of work in washing to go without stockings, too."

"Not at all. Not at all. It will soon be warm enough for us to go bathing in the river and we shall institute baths, such as the Greeks had, where we can experience the joys of living. As for the robe—once you wear it no one will know whether you are fat or thin. That's their charm—they half reveal and half conceal. Mr. Pierce has sent me two bolts of beautiful silk crêpe and I will give them to you for graduation dresses. Are you willing to start dress reform under such conditions?"

Both Beacons felt that it was worth some sacrifice of style to possess garments of such texture. Mrs. Schwind had a vision of using the dress after graduation to make endless clothes for christenings, first communions and other state occasions. Mrs. Middleton, as social leader, knew that if she ventured forth in Greek robes, the neighbors would immediately imitate her, for she had been a dress-maker before her marriage and still set the styles for the Alley.

It took longer than the club members anticipated to make the garments, for Miss Wilde believed in hand-sewing as a means of developing character, and refused the offer of Mrs. Middleton's sewing-machine. Mrs. Schwind's prolonged absences caused great disorder in her household. Helene, her eldest daughter, tried her best, but could keep not even a semblance of quiet, and neighbors complained that sounds from the third floor rear disturbed the entire house.

On the day that only the finishing touches of the graduation dress remained, Mrs. Schwind decided to stay in the Garret until it was finished, leaving directions for supper with Helene. Jim came home, tired, cross and hungry. It had been a hard day and he was still feeling the effects of a prolonged political meeting on the preceding night. Long before he reached the door of his flat, he heard sounds of scuffling and quarreling—of a din above which the cries of the baby and the wails of Royal and Patricia rose sharply.

"What ails ye?" he demanded roughly. "Where's your Ma? What's the supper?"

"The supper is here, Pa," explained the patient Helene. "Ma said they could all have three dates and a slice of brown bread. She's to the Garret finishing her dress. She'll be graduating soon."

"She is, is she," growled Jim. "Well, she'd better be here graduatin' to her natural duties. Is that all the grub ye got?"

"Nothin' ever but prunes and dates and oil and bread," answered Henry Morton. "Gee! I'd like to burn up the old Garret. I wish Ma wasn't no Beacon."

"She wont be." Jim's assurance convinced them all. "Quit bawling, kids. Your Pa is on the job. Helene, run over to the delicatess' and buy a string of hot dogs and enough pickled pigs' trilbys for the gang. Mary, take the pail to Tom—tell him I'll settle later."

Not long after, Mrs. Schwind, resplendent in her new robe, appeared at the door. She was a large woman and the flowing dress of white crêpe accentuated her size. Her hair, which was usually done in a tight little coil like the knob on a tea-pot, was arranged low, with bands of black velvet. As a finishing touch, Miss Wilde had contributed sandals of light blue. Jim stared at her in amazement and the children shouted with delight.

"Look at Ma! Who's loony now? Oh, my eye," called Henry Morton. He began appreciatively to whistle, "Nobody's got anything on me."

Mrs. Schwind, however, forgot her splendor as her eye fell upon the banquet of the lower life. The healthful and nutritious meal which she had planned was replaced by viands which Miss Wilde had pronounced positively poisonous to body and soul. She saw tiny Tom with a sausage in each chubby fist; Mary and Helene were sharing a pail of beer which had circulated like a loving-cup. She advanced, protesting, but Jim anticipated her remarks.

"I've just been tellin' the kids," he said coldly, "that you was after moving

to the Garret to live with that there Beaconess. It aint for ladies that dress like Little Lord Fauntleroy and eat bird-food to mix with common Schwinds what aint got no souls. To-morrow I'm gittin' another lady to take care of the house."

Jim's manner was impressive because studied politeness was unusual with him. It was his custom to swear and storm and threaten when things did not please him, and Mrs. Schwind was alarmed by his calmness.

"What do you mean? Are you mad 'cause I was iate?"

"No. We aint mad. I've just decided, that's all. You can have your friends and wear your night-gown on the street and put petticoats on the furniture—you can do as you darn please. But you can't spend my cash learnin' fool religion and buyin' silly food. Either you earn your salt inside or you go out to work like Mis' Murphy."

Mrs. Schwind stood transfixed with astonishment. She was usually the aggressor and Jim on the defensive, and she hardly knew how to manage him in the new rôle of head of the house of Schwind. She looked at the children and a wave of longing went over her. The Garret had occupied her attention so completely that she had almost forgotten how precious they were.

"I guess you needn't go to fire me," she said meekly. "If you don't want to live in the Better Way, I wont force you. I was graduatin' to-day and goin' to be a demonstrator, but I'll give Mis' Hennigin my place. She's crazy to be a Beacon. Now that I see you all so happy with your vittles I'm thinkin' I'd like a taste of hot dog myself."

"Butt in, Ma," condescended Jim. "You're welcome if you'll quit beaconsin'—but mind you, no Better Ways for the Schwinds—the old is good enough for us."

The Factors In The Case

BY SAMUEL GORDON

ILLUSTRATED BY EDMUND FREDERICK

(See Frontispiece)

MAIMIE, getting those sandwiches ready?"

"They're quite ready, dear," came the reply from below.

Harold Critchett—or Horace Westover, which was the pen-name by which he was known to the world at large—walked back to the looking-glass where he had been fixing his dress-tie with elaborate care, laughing queerly. It hardly needed his sense of humor, the delicate, whimsical humor, which was only one of the attributes for which he had been so highly lauded, to make him feel the ridiculousness, nay, almost the grotesqueness of the situation. So life oscillated between sublimeness and absurdities. For an evening at the Opera

with Lady Hammardine, he was making ready by a snack of cold-meat sandwiches. He perused again—for the tenth time—the crested and perfumed note he had received that afternoon.

Dear Mr. Westover:—

If you have nothing better to do to-night will you join me at "Romeo et Juliette?" Destinn is singing. My box is 23. I do hope you will come.

Very sincerely yours,
Constance Hammardine.

"I do hope you will come!" He wondered, as he had wondered before, whether the almost pleading importunity of the request concealed a touch of irony. And did she really think he needed the additional attraction of some bright, par-

ticular star? He turned again to the glass, half ashamed of his somewhat unmanly vanity and, as a sort of excuse, shifted his tie a hundredth part of an inch. But secretly he knew that he was glad of the still boyish handsomeness of his face. Nobody had troubled much about his face, least of all himself, while he was merely an obscure journalist. But since his sudden leap into fame, it appeared to have taken to itself, at least according to the newspaper paragraphs, all the characteristics that might be supposed to mirror a beautiful mind. He sickened a little, for at heart he was of an honest make, at the sycophancy that slavered the successful man. He certainly hoped that it was not to his good looks that he was indebted for Lady Hammardine's invitation to an evening at the Opera.

He started at the sound of his wife's voice through the half-open door.

"I thought I would bring them up to you," she said, hesitatingly.

"All right—put them on the table," he replied, none too graciously.

It was only after some time that he seemed to become aware that she was still in the room.

"Anything you want?" he asked.

"Are you likely to be late?" she said in some little confusion.

"How on earth can I tell?" he answered tartly. "Shouldn't be surprised if she's made some arrangement for me afterwards. Perhaps she'll take me on with her to some crush. Got my hat and coat ready?"

"Yes, in the hall."

With a nod he pushed the plate away and hurried past her. She followed him to the top of the landing and from there watched him flinging on his coat.

"So-long, Maimie," he called back to her.

"Good-by, dear—enjoy yourself."

He slammed the street door behind him with some force. In a vague kind of way he resented the impression of the wistful face and voice he was taking away with him. Always that woe-begone, pathetic air! Why couldn't she make a better show of feeling glad at the good

fortune the gods had vouchsafed to him? Perhaps she thought it all idle pretense, his talk about the great store of wonderful knowledge he had been garnering these last three months under Lady Hammardine's tutorship. He scowled at the thought. His wife was such a clever woman, much cleverer—he had no hesitation in admitting it—than himself. Her grasp of things, as a rule, was so quick, her judgment almost unerring. But for her critical keenness his book would not have been the literary masterpiece it was. Yet on this point she had shown herself preternaturally, unintelligibly dense. Time after time he had attempted to explain to her what it really meant for him, this insight into a new world, this broadening of his outlook on life, this galvanizing of his faculties and his blood. She had listened patiently, it was true, but with no intelligent enthusiasm. And then suddenly a hot flush spread over his face. Had he explained everything to her—dare he, for instance, let her understand the real impulse that sped him forth on his errand to-night? For her own sake he must make his heart a closed book to her. She would not find it such pleasant reading as, say, his press notices.

His taxi. slowed up under the portico of the opera house and presently he found himself in the crowded vestibule. His thoughts fell from him like rags from a disguised beggar prince. Nothing unpleasant or ugly or small could hold its place in the wide, rare atmosphere of this land of enchantment. He asked his way to Lady Hammardine's box, found it and stepped in. She was already there. It was as much as he could do to face her steadily with that furious quickening of his pulse. Each time he saw her she was a fresh surprise to him. To-night her dazzlingly gracious young womanhood seemed to go utterly beyond his visual comprehension. She held out her hand to him with a smile.

"I remembered I mentioned no time in my note, and I had to be here early to receive you. Wasn't it good of me?"

"Thank you," he replied simply. For

the life of him he could not accommodate his words to her bantering manner.

"Sit here, and let me show you the people," she said, indicating a chair.

He took it eagerly. His quick mind instantly grasped the fact that in this position he would be able to scrutinize undisturbedly her profile and the delicate curve of her shoulder as she sat watching the stage.

The overture began, cadencing into the first act, for him one long, breathless feast of sensation. The interval that followed, as well as the succeeding ones, was filled by an unceasing stream of visitors to the box. He could not make up his mind which was the greater, his chagrin at the interruptions or his pride at being the favored guest of one so courted. Lady Hammardine introduced him to everybody, tried to draw him into the circle. Some of them looked at him with idle curiosity, others with ill-concealed condescension. To him it was another experience to be entered in his mental note-book, this impalpable yet massive barrier of caste. He listened with half an ear to the empty chatter, the barely comprehensible idiom of this strange world. He had better company in his own thoughts.

The curtain rustled down on the last act. Amid the surging waves of applause, that turned the house into a veritable ocean of sound, Lady Hammardine's box seemed like an island of silence. He helped her on with her cloak and something in her manner made him feel, with an expectant thrill, that the evening, as far as it had gone, had not yet commenced for them. The immortal tragedy they had witnessed was but the prologue to a drama of their own. There was perhaps a touch of constraint in the words with which she turned to him.

"I half promised to meet some people at the Savoy, but I don't think I shall. If you like you can come home and have some supper with me."

As in a dream he followed her down and seated himself next to her in the electric brougham. The bright blaze of the streets through which they whirled seemed to interfere with their privacy. A

few commonplace remarks tided over the distance to Hammardine House. Critchett had been there before on various occasions, but never at such an intimate hour as this. As they entered the dining-room, a dapper little man, his face slightly wizened but healthily tanned, and with a bright airiness about his manner, rose from the table and came forward.

"Ah, Mr.—Mr.—er—"

"Westover," prompted Critchett.

"Oh, yes, excuse me. Awf'ly kind of you to bring my wife home. Sorry now I didn't wait for you, my dear, but felt pretty peckish—Don't mind, Connie, do you?"

"Certainly not, Taffy," she replied quietly. "But please keep Mr. Westover company for a moment or two till I come down again."

"Of course, of course, my dear. Cigarette, Mr.—Mr.—difficult name, that of yours—"

"Thanks," said Critchett, taking one.

"You're the young man that wrote a book—'Live Flies,' or something, wasn't it?"

"'Living Lies,'" Critchett corrected him gravely. Nothing was further from his thoughts than to take offense at Lord Hammardine's manner.

"Oh, yes, excuse me. D'you know, sir, seems to me a devilish clever thing to write a book. How is it done?"

"Oh, quite easily." The exultation of the hour filled Critchett with an elfish humor. A buoyant recklessness was upon him that would not be denied vent. "You see, all you've got to do is to take pen and ink and a good supply of blank paper—"

"Yes?" said Lord Hammardine attentively.

"Well, you scribble and scribble till you've covered a certain or uncertain number of pages, then you get the whole thing typewritten and send it to the publisher. He does the rest."

"Oh, indeed? Then it's really quite simple."

"The simplest thing in the world," agreed Critchett, keeping a straight face.

"Oh, then I know a trick worth two of that," said Lord Hamardine with a quaint, wiseacre air. "Writing books is all very well, but have you ever tried driving a four-in-hand?"

"Frankly speaking, I have not," replied Critchett.

"Now there's a thing that requires brains. You get an unmanageable beast in the team, and you'll feel like having to coax a cyclone into a good temper. You know I'm considered one of the best whips in the country."

"Are you?" asked Critchett, impressed in spite of himself.

"Yes, sir, I am indeed."

The door opened and Lady Hamardine returned.

"What are you doing to-night, Taffy?" she asked.

"I'm off, my dear. I'm due at Glendenning's for bridge. I'm late as it is. Good-night, Mr.—"

"Good-night, Lord Hamardine," said Critchett, not without a considerable feeling of relief.

"Good-night, Con, dear." The words sounded rather tentative.

"'Night, Taffy," said Lady Hamardine, her back to her husband.

So it was she did not see, though Critchett saw, the look with which Lord Hamardine fixed her as he passed out. That look came to Critchett with a curious sense of familiarity. He had seen it before somewhere. Yes—it was the sort of look he had surprised on Maimie's face when she thought he was not observing her. A strange psychological phenomenon, this apparent congeniality of emotions between a great peer of the realm and a humble suburban housewife. How life plagiarized itself! When he had time he would try to puzzle it out. But now—

The meal passed gaily but trivially in the constraining presence of the hovering man-servant.

"We shall take coffee in the small drawing-room," said Lady Hamardine as she rose.

Critchett followed with slow, meditative steps. He half wished he could recapture a strain of that clownish humor

which had possessed him in his talk with Lord Hamardine. It was impossible, even if it had not been sacrilege. In the presence of this woman, alone with her, nothing seemed to count save the serious issues of life, its catastrophic moments, its magnificent emergencies—

"Thank you for a wonderful evening," he said.

She handed him a box of cigarettes and lit one of them herself.

"The wonderfulness is all of your own making," she replied with a little laugh. Then she continued more soberly: "But, of course, I understand you—there is the charm of novelty. I understand, because I envy. It's a long time since life was to me anything but a day-to-day dreariness of routine," she added with a sigh.

"You don't let it appear so," he said, scanning her closely. He felt the great crisis was at hand and every word must be given its true value.

"No? Well, one learns to pretend. In our sphere of life pretending becomes a fine art. Without it we should take to clawing each other for a pastime."

"Have you been pretending to me?"

The question took her aback by its abruptness.

"In what way?" she asked.

"I have been wondering whether your interest in me is genuine, or whether I am merely a whim—an oasis in the dreary desert of your routine, from which your caravan will presently pack up and pass on. You know a man objects to being a makeshift."

"I thought I had left you no doubt of my friendship," she said with reproachful surprise.

"Forgive me," he said, penitent yet uplifted. "The things one hopes for most one believes in least. If a beggar becomes a millionaire he will begin by thinking it a practical joke. I have been doubting and wondering all the time, and it's only a tribute to you if I go on doubting and wondering to the end."

"Don't you think you labor the point somewhat, Mr. Westover?" she asked, lowering her eyes.

"Yes, if you think I emphasize too



"Please keep Mr. Westover company till I come down again"

much what your friendship has meant for me," he replied quickly. "Perhaps, too, I may have a special reason for insisting on it so strongly to-night."

"What reason?"

He could not answer, for at that moment the footman entered, bringing in the coffee and liqueurs. With an air of perfect unconcern Lady Hammardine went over to the piano and struck a casual chord or two.

"Do you remember this?" she asked across her shoulder.

And then she plunged into the entrancing love-duet from the opera they had heard that night, singing to it in a low, mellow voice, well-attuned to its melodious ecstasy, its haunting refrain full of passionate surrender—"Toujours à toi." He caught the phrase; his heart was thrilled and numbed by it in turns. Was it a half-veiled promise—or an arrant touch of coquetry?

The man had withdrawn. She broke off instantly. Critchett knew her silence was a challenge for his answer. He shook himself awake. Now, if ever, he must keep himself alert.

"I shall give you my reason," he said, as though there had been no interruption. "I have said what I said to-night, because there may be no other opportunity."

"Oh, come, come," she said brightly, "that's no reason as far as I am concerned."

"You are very kind. But there's myself, too. Lady Hammardine, we are standing at the parting of the ways. I am saying good-by."

He watched her keenly, like a gambler risking the decisive card. What if she took him at his word? But she only seemed astonished.

"Why, Mr. Westover?"

"Because I feel no longer inclined—perhaps I should rather say, I feel no longer the strength—to deceive myself or you," he said, his heart in his mouth. "I know, of course, and you know what brought us originally together. With me it was a natural touch of vanity, with you the chance of playing the not uninteresting game of a Mæcenæ. But it's

no longer a case of retainer and patron. I've begun to remember that you are a woman and I a man."

"Well, and suppose I thought we had started with that?"

"It would have been all right if we had. Then there would have been no room for developments, for complications. We might even have realized the danger at once and gone no further. You note I am speaking for the two of us. As it is—"

"Yes, as it is?"

He made no answer, simply turning away from her with an expressive shrug.

"What a pity," she murmured.

"Yes, a damnable pity, isn't it?" he cried, spinning fiercely round again. And then his voice softened. "But I'm glad you understand. You've made my confession so much less difficult."

"Was it really so difficult for you to confess—?"

"That you are all in all to me?" he took her up glowingly, carried away by his own impetus. "I know I run a terrible risk. The mere mention of love might make it spell loss, the loss of what after all is the next best thing to it—your friendship. And then you ask me if it was difficult!"

"I—I think I want to share the risk with you," she answered almost inaudibly.

The softly shaded room seemed to blaze up in a coruscation of light. From immeasurable distances the echo of the lovers' duet rose into an organ-swell. Blinded and deafened, it was no wonder he doubted if his senses were serving him aright.

"Constance, do you know what you are saying? Have you weighed your words?"

"More than my words—my thoughts."

He forced back a cry of triumph. His hands shot out to seize hers, to draw her to him, but she cowered back with a shrinking gesture.

"Oh, no—not yet!"

"You have overrated your courage," he said in a tone of bitter disappointment.

"Not my courage, but my discretion."

she replied, turning to him an appealing glance. "Horace,"—he thrilled at the name—"if I had to brave it all openly, you would find me courageous enough. Up to now I have nothing to hide. But once I must start wearing a mask—don't you see? I want a little time to school myself. It's a different sort of pretending from what I've done hitherto. Give me a little respite. You won't miss it, Horace. The future—our future—is so vast—"

He looked steadily, deeply into her eyes, as though he were trying to drown his whole soul in the depths of them. Then he said:

"Yes, I think you mean it. Very well. I won't hurry you. I'll wait till you come to me of your own accord—as long as I know I have something to wait for."

"And, please, will you go now?"

He made a sign of demur.

"You're not angry with me?" he asked anxiously.

"If I were angry I should let you stay. But I want to be alone. I want to begin at once rehearsing for my part. The sooner I begin, the sooner I shall be ready for you."

"That's good—that's glorious. But I won't go with nothing at all. Let me have a keepsake, something to prove to me, when I wake up to-morrow morning, that it wasn't all a dream." He stepped over to the mantel-shelf, detached a small photo' of hers from its frame and held it out to her. "Give me this."

"Take it," she said instantly.

"Write on it," he said, holding his fountain-pen ready.

"Oh, insatiable one," she smiled.

She took the pen, pondered for a moment or two, and then, with a resolute flourish, she wrote.

"*Toujours à toi,*" he read. I think I can be satisfied with that," he exclaimed exultantly, gazing his gratitude at her.

And with that he went. There was no formal leave-taking. It seemed words were no longer necessary to interpret one to the other. They spoke through their thoughts.

The balmy midsummer night encompassed him with a caressing touch. The very flagstones had become a velvety carpet on which his foot trod with elastic resilience. Yes, it had been a wonderful evening, the sort of evening one might live in a fairy-tale. And its greatest wonder consisted in its premonition of others more wondrous still. He shuddered to think it might have passed without its crisis. He might still have been writhing in the throes of his uncertainty, in the nagging impotence of the unattainable.

Maimie? Oh, no, he had not forgotten her. He had reckoned with her in the new scheme of things. She was a shadow, a retrospect which had become merged in the overwhelming, resplendent entity of the woman he had just left. As such, if she cared, she could keep her place. But no more. His fists clenched tightly. It was ever so, and so it ought to be. The race was always to the strong—the weak must go to the wall. There never was a victory worth the name if no one paid the cost of it.

His pace slowed down as he approached his home. The defiant mood that was upon him made him rattle the key with unnecessary noise. It was not in keeping with the greatness of the occasion that he should sneak in like a thief. As he walked in he saw Maimie in the open doorway of the sitting-room.

"What, still up?" he asked with half-angry *bonhomie*.

"I thought you might be wanting some cocoa, dear—shall I heat it up?"

He made a wry mouth. Cocoa—when the taste of nectar was on his lips!

"Don't bother. You get to bed."

"And you?"

"I'm going to work. The fit's on me. Good-night."

He waited to close the door on her, but she still remained.

"Well?" he asked curtly.

"I only wanted to know—will you be free next Sunday?"

The question was evidently fraught with an inner significance that came home to him. His gaze fell and he moved away from her.

"Can't say—don't know what may happen," he at last replied sullenly.

"All right, dear. Good-night."

She closed the door softly and went up to her room. For some time the muffled echo of his tread came to her through the jerry-built ceiling. Then there was silence. A neighboring clock signaled to her the passing of the night. One hour went—another, a third. Then she became alarmed. He never worked much at night; his best hours were the morning. She tip-toed down, and peered through the door that stood slightly ajar. He was asleep, his head, pillowed on his elbow, resting against the table. She stole up noiselessly, with half an idea of rousing him from his uncomfortable position. So she saw, within the crook of his arm and his lips almost touching it, the photo' with its inscription. She looked, crowding an eternity into a moment, to make sure that there was no illusion. Then she crept back, leaving him asleep, to keep her vigil by the side of her own dead hopes. And by the time the dawn came, her heart had hardened to its resolve.

II

Lady Hamardine did not come down to breakfast next morning, which was nothing unusual. When she did not appear at lunch either, Lord Hamardine made inquiries, first by messenger and then in person. He found his wife in her rooms, where she had taken her meals, or at least had appeared to do so. She looked haggard, with faint, blue shadows under her eyes.

"Aren't you well, my dear?" he asked solicitously.

"I slept badly."

"Season beginning to tell on you, eh?"

She shrugged her shoulders.

"Well, thank goodness we're getting to the fag-end of it. You hang about too much in stuffy places. That reminds me—what about the meet at Marble Arch to-morrow?"

"What about it?" she asked listlessly.

"I'll have the blue and yellow coach and the four chestnuts. Gad, you'd make

a stunning figure next to the box-seat. All the other fellows'll go green with envy."

"Don't be absurd, Taffy."

"What, absurd because I'm proud of my wife? Tell you what we'll do. We'll go to Hampton Court and back. A blow in the open will do you good, my dear."

"Thanks very much. But I'm afraid I haven't the time."

His somewhat expressionless features became clouded with a frown.

"You never have time for me. You have plenty, though, for that writer chap of yours." The concluding words seemed to escape him unawares.

"Tafford!" she exclaimed.

"Oh, don't take on about it," he said with a thin laugh. "I meant nothing, don't you know. You can't say I ever do anything to queer your arrangements. I'll let you into a secret. I wasn't really due at Glendenning's last night. I cleared out of here in case I was *de trop*. Why shouldn't I? After all, I'm convinced my wife's a lady, title and all. Well, it wasn't a bad investment. I won over three hundred. Seems to me there's a lot of truth in those old proverbs, eh, what?"

"You seem bent on irritating me," she cried, her color coming and going.

At once his manner became apologetic, almost humble.

"Upon my word, Connie, I'm not. Believe me, my girl, all I want is to see you happy. Let's know if there's anything worrying you. Debts? Let me give you another thousand a year—another two. You'll really be doing me a favor. I don't know what to do with all my wretched pelf."

She shook her head.

"No? Well, perhaps you're right. 'Tisn't fair I should put you to the trouble of spending my money because I can't do it myself. But, tell the truth, Connie,"—there was a note of eager, almost childish ingenuousness in his voice—"don't you think you've done well by me?"

"What do you mean?" she asked in displeased surprise.

"I mean when you married me. I

know I'm nearly twice as old as you, and I'm not clever like—like other people, but you've had your compensations, haven't you?"

"Really, Taffy, I don't know what—"

"I'm driving at? If you ask me, Con, I hardly know myself. But I feel like having a talk with you—it's not often I get the chance. I want to say I promised you a good time when I proposed to you, and you've had it, haven't you? I should think you spend five times as much on your clothes as your father's living was worth. And don't forget, I've had him made a canon since."

"If you wish to imply that you bought me with your money and your influence, you're hardly paying yourself a great compliment," she said coldly.

"That's exactly what it is, Connie," he cried eagerly, slapping his thigh. "Now that's just what I wanted to get at. I was hoping that I'm a little bit more to you than the goose that lays the golden eggs. Now I'd like to be, just for the joke of the thing, a poor devil—oh, not for always, heaven forbid, but, say, for a week or two, just to see what you'd be like to me."

"I assure you it wouldn't make the slightest difference in my feelings for you," she said, avoiding his gaze.

"Hm, that doesn't bring me any forrader," he said dubiously. "Hang it all, Connie, seems to me I've come to a stage when I want to know what it's like to have a wife and not a fashion-plate. From every illustrated paper I take up you stare me in the face. 'Latest portrait of Lady Hammardine in court dress.' 'Lady Hammardine and her pet dogs'—upon my word, I sometimes feel inclined to go round and find some chap to give me an introduction to you."

"What do you want?" she asked abruptly.

"Well, you, chiefly—pat, that, wasn't it? I suppose you've made your usual arrangements for Scotland or the moors after Goodwood. Cancel 'em, there's a good girl. Let's make you a proposition. There's my yacht lying in the Solent, eating her head off. I'll scratch her for the Regatta, and we'll be off to the

Mediterranean—No, that's too hot this time of the year, but we can do Norway and the fjords—"

"A cruise? Oh, that's awfully dull," she said, trying to make her words ring steady.

"We might ask one or two people, say, that author friend of yours—"

She did not see the furtive scrutiny of his look as he spoke. She was too busy giving her outward attitude a show of unconcern.

"Mr. Westover? Yes, why not invite him?"

"I'm damned if I will—doubly and trebly damned," cried Hammardine, his face puckered with fury. "I want you to understand, Madam, that if I take you away with me it's for my own edification, and not to make the fifth wheel to the cart. If you're good enough for me, I'm good enough for you, and no trimmings, do you understand? No hangers-on—"

He broke off with a choking little gasp that seemed a reflex of the half-terrified agitation with which she stood facing him. His manner changed suddenly, and he cowered back like an abashed child that fears the outcome of its naughtiness.

"So far, these are still my rooms, Tafford," she said, having recovered herself.

"I'm sorry, Con, awf'ly, dreadfully sorry," he said, mopping his forehead with his handkerchief. "Don't know for the life of me what made me let loose like that. The weather, I expect—I've felt it in my bones for days. Let's just pretend I've said nothing. If you like I'll keep out of your way for a day or two, to give you time to forget and forgive; eh, what?"

"I'll think it over," she replied icily.

He lingered about for another few moments and then, with a vague gesture of resigned helplessness, he left the room.

She stared after him, seeing nothing through the mist of angry tears that filled her eyes. Then her mood took a sudden turn, and she found it hard work to keep from laughing. Oh, the

humor of it—little Taffy trying his hand at heroics! He might even have grown into a man if she hadn't snuffed him out so suddenly. With a little imagination she might even conceive that there was some strength in his very invertebrateness. His meekness was self-mastery in disguise. She leapt to her feet. Thank heaven, at last she had struck the right note. Taffy had asserted his rights. He had protested and partly at least, he suspected. They had come to grips—they had entered on a conflict of wills. She was no longer treading on a worm, she was no longer hoodwinking a blind man. It was this that had seemed to her so contemptible in this mad enterprise of hers. He had played into her hands. A conflict of wills—a claim of rights? She, too, had rights to claim, the right of happiness for one, and her claim—she promised herself in a very transport of defiance—should come first.

She would lose no time in clinching her resolve. Her outdoor toilet was nearly complete; she would go to the nearest post-office and send Westover a wire to meet her. Her inclination to hysterical merriment was finding vent in spasmodic ripples of laughter. She checked herself at the sound of a knock at the door. A servant entered.

"There's a person to see your ladyship, a young woman—I might say a lady."

"What name?" she inquired impatiently.

"Crotchett, or Crickett, I think she said, my lady. She has no card."

"Tell her I have no time. Let her write—"

She had turned to ring for her maid when a sudden presentiment, nay more, a flash of intuition, made her break off and rooted her to the spot.

"Show her up, Marshall," she said curtly.

Even without the garbled name she would have known who it was. She even saw in it a dramatic, if disconcerting, fitness. So far she had only taken account of her husband—she had given no thought to the wife. It was just as well that she should deal with all the

factors in the case. "The factors in the case!"—she rather liked that expression. Maimie had entered and the two women stood facing each other for a few breathless seconds.

"Pardon my intruding—perhaps you may know me better under the name of Westover," Maimie said, breaking the silence.

"Wont you sit down?" said Lady Hammardine, having regained her self-possession.

"Thank you. I wont keep your ladyship long."

Lady Hammardine's mind worked quickly.

"It is I who owe you an apology, Mrs. Critchett. I ought to have asked your husband to bring you to see me before. I meant to."

Mamie gazed at her, nonplused. She realized, all at once, that she was no match for this woman of the world. If she gave her time for subterfuges, for evasions, she was lost.

"Oh, please, Lady Hammardine," she said, her hand stretched out with a gesture of entreaty, "let us be honest with each other. I have only simple words for what I have to say. I have come to tell you that my husband is in love with you."

"But really, Mrs. Critchett, there's nothing tragic about that," said Lady Hammardine, forcing a laugh. "Besides, I don't think it's true. And if it is, it was rather indiscreet of him to tell—"

"He hasn't told me. He never tells me anything," was the sorrowful reply.

"Ah, there you have it. From what you say I take it that your husband has been neglecting you a little of late, and you at once jump to the conclusion that there's another woman in it. But, if I may advise you, you should take that as in the day's work. Consider the circumstances. Your husband has suddenly become famous. He would be more than human if his head weren't a little turned. He may show it in his domestic relations. I really don't see"—her tone was one of injured innocence—"why you should saddle *me* with the responsibility."



She saw, within the crook of his arm the photo' with its inscription

"And the photograph, Lady Hamardine—with your inscription on it?" interposed Maimie quickly.

Lady Hamardine drew back with a little hiss of anger. This foolish woman insisted on driving her into a corner. Well, then, upon her own head be the consequence of her foolishness.

"Very good, Mrs. Critchett. Since you know so much, you may as well know all. It's true: your husband loves me—and I love him."

"I am glad," breathed Maimie.

Lady Hamardine made a quick movement of astonishment. Was the woman in her right senses?

"You are extremely philosophical," she said with a sneer.

"I am glad," repeated Maimie monotonously, "to have the truth at last. It's something to see one's way clear."

"It's your fault entirely," cried Lady Hamardine, flushing with annoyance and, perhaps, also with—was it a tinge of shame? "You came here deliberately to force us two into this awkward and unconventional situation."

"Oh, don't be afraid; I take the full blame for it," Maimie assured her dispassionately. "I was quite sure of it before I came. But I wanted it from your own lips before—"

"Before what?" asked Lady Hamardine in alarm. The woman was becoming stranger and stranger.

"I'll come to it presently, Lady Hamardine. I want to explain my standpoint to you first. I am not only Harold Critchett's wife. I have also some share in Horace Westover."

"Don't talk to me in riddles."

"I thought you would follow me. He would admit it, if it were put to him. I did something towards making him what he is. Oh, no, no—I didn't write his book, but there were other things than the mere writing. It was I who comforted him when he despaired. It was I who gave him new courage to persevere when things seemed to be going hopelessly wrong. I cheerfully faced the risk of starvation when he threw up his post to give his energies free and undivided to his task. Nobody, not even he, will

ever know the days and nights of torture I lived through for him."

"I don't see how—"

"You will in a moment," Maimie interrupted Lady Hamardine. "And having done all this I don't want my work spoiled in the end. I know he is capable of still greater things than he has done. He has no further need of my help, but I want to make sure, as far as I humanly can, that nothing will happen to mar his chance of giving his genius full scope."

Lady Hamardine was toying with a fan, but from under her veiled eyes she was watching Maimie with close-pent scrutiny.

"And that brings me to you, Lady Hamardine. You great people have strange humors. I know something of you—I was governess in a duke's household. From the life you lead you can't possibly know your mind from one day to another. You must have your playthings at any price. I know there are other obstacles between you and my husband—that's your concern. But if you will guarantee to me that you really love him, that you will not wreck his career and break his heart, then, I, for my part, am quite prepared to make room—to clear out and away."

"Out and away—what do you mean?" asked Lady Hamardine, now thoroughly startled.

"That's my affair, if you don't mind," said Maimie, still with that frozen monotony of voice. "I have said nothing to him—I had to make sure of you first. But now I make you the offer, freely and without any after-thought. I have spent seven years in trying to make him happy, and I have failed. It's only right I should stand aside and let some one else take up the task."

Lady Hamardine had risen to her feet, her face white and tense.

"Heavens, what you must have suffered to make you talk like this," she murmured.

"Please leave me out of the question," said Maimie. "I may have suffered, but that's done with. I have cut my losses."

Her quiet manner only increased Lady

Hammond's apprehensions. Something must be done to bring this woman, whose very calmness only seemed a sort of petrified frenzy, back to a rational state.

"But listen," she said, gripping Maimie fiercely by the arm, "are you quite sure you've lost him? There's that silly photo' of mine, it's true, but that doesn't prove everything."

"I have other proof, Lady Hammond."

For the first time during their interview Maimie's composure appeared to waver. The steely gleam in her eyes softened with the moisture that gathered in them. Her hand fumbled at her heart.

"Yes, I have other proof. The loosening of all outward links I might have ignored. But there was one unseen bond which I thought would tie him to me as long as there was breath in our bodies. That too has snapped. Lady Hammond, there is a little grave in Kensal Green. Every Sunday, for close on three years, we have made our way there, like pilgrims to a shrine. We used to stand by that little grave, and our child seemed to come and join our hands. The first time he missed was that Sunday when you sent him a hasty message to make one of your party on the river. And he has not been since—because he sits at home waiting for messages from you. Once or twice I went by myself. Then I too left off going. The pain of my loneliness was more than I could endure. You see there is a limit even to *my* philosophy."

Lady Hammond had walked to the window, where she stood tracing patterns on the pane. After a while she came back with a step jerkily irregular.

"What do you want me to do?" she asked curtly.

"To make the most of your triumph—to use it for the best."

"And you choose that, finally, definitely?"

"The choice was with you from the first."

"Very well. You shall have your way."

Maimie looked at her frankly, fearlessly—looked at the cold, imperious

face, with its enigmatic smile, and through her agonized heart ran a quiver of thankfulness. Something at least she had saved out of the wreck of her emotions, if only the most worthless part of them—her pride. She saw how fatuous, how futile would have been an appeal to her rival's forbearance, her rival's mercy. Thank God, she had not humbled herself. If anything she had played the infinitely more dignified part—the giver was always greater than the recipient. She moved slowly to the door.

"Will you wait a moment?" said Lady Hammond. "I want to come with you," she added.

"What—home?" whispered Maimie.

"Yes, you see I—I want to take possession at once. He is waiting for my answer."

"Oh, yes, yes, that's right. Don't let him wait longer than you can help."

In a minute or two Lady Hammond was ready. Out in the street she hailed a taxicab and followed Maimie in. All during the drive one phrase throbbed through her brain. "A little grave—a little grave." Oh, even a little grave was better than nothing, she told herself with a fierce twining of her hands. They alighted without having uttered a word. Maimie opened the door with a key.

"We have no servant," she said vaguely. "You will find him in there," she added, pointing to the study door.

Lady Hammond nodded and gently turned the knob. Critchett was sitting with his back to her, writing furiously. At the swish of woman's clothes he jerked his head impatiently round. Then he leapt up and stood staring at her in incredulous bewilderment.

"I have come," she said, smiling at him uncertainly.

With a stride he was upon her, grasping her hand.

"Constance, what, so soon—so soon?" he babbled.

She freed herself and, sitting down, looked round the room.

"Is this where you wrote 'Living Lies?'" she asked.

"Yes, most of it. But,"—his words

blundered along—"how did you get in—I heard nothing—"

"I came with your wife."

"But how did you meet?"

He broke off as he suddenly grasped the trivial nature of his questions. He was here face to face with Fate, incarnate Fate, and it was absurd to ask where and why and how. She was here, and her presence meant—what?

"I've often tried to imagine your work-room," she was saying lightly. "Oh, it's quite different from what I thought. But then everything turns out otherwise than one expects, doesn't it?"

"Yes, I didn't expect you," he said, trying to maintain his sanguine mood.

"A good instance. But I'll give you a better one." She moved nearer to him. "Do you remember what we were talking about last night?"

"Do I remember?" he cried, astonished.

"We were saying we were in love with each other. It appears we were mistaken. We were only in love with ourselves."

"The two things are not contradictory," he said anxiously, almost pleadingly. "Without self-love there would be no virtue in the sacrifices lovers are prepared to make for each other."

"Yes, when they sacrifice what is their own to sacrifice."

"Oh, I see. You are drawing back," he said bitterly. "I knew it was all too good to be true. You were fooling me after all."

For answer she moved still nearer, till she was quite close to him, gazing at him strangely. And before he knew what was happening her arms were round his neck and her lips burnt momentarily on his. Then she gently slipped off the arm he had frenziedly thrown about her waist and moved again out of his reach. But he hardly seemed to notice it. The transfigured look on his face told of pain assuaged, of disappointment turned into triumph.

"So you were only testing me!" he cried joyously.

"No, I was only giving you your due. That should have been yours last night. I want to prove to you that I am not a

cheat. So this is where you wrote 'Living Lies?'"

"God, why do you harp on that?" he asked, his brain reeling under the kaleidoscopic changes of her mood.

"Because it's the proper place in which to discuss a few living truths. Horace, you have put many noble thoughts into your book. Have you kept none back for yourself? It's a queer notion that comes to me—it seems you only wrote your book; you have never read it. Else you would have seen the gulf between your brain and your heart."

He looked at her dumfounded.

"Oh, don't mistake me," she went on. "I'm every bit as bad as you. I admired you for what you did, and forgot that what a man does is not the same as what he is. To that extent I am your fellow in guilt. But, Horace, as we were both prepared to descend to the depths, so have we an equal right to help each other back to the heights."

His lips quivered before he spoke. Then he said dully:

"In heaven's name, tell me what has happened."

"My husband came to me," she replied, more matter-of-fact. "How I took his approaches—that's a better word than reproaches—is no concern of yours. It wouldn't interest you. Even my own interest in it is only just beginning to dawn. But it was different, when close after him your wife came."

"Yes, and flustered you—bullied you," he exclaimed angrily.

"Hardly that. I admit she frightened me a little. It made me giddy to try and follow her to the altitudes to which human unselfishness can rise. Have you ever taken the trouble to study your wife?"

"Oh, I know she is a hundred times too good for me," he said sullenly.

"You don't realize how thoroughly anxious she is to prove that," said Lady Hammardine quickly. Then her tone changed suddenly and grew hushed to an awed solemnity. "The midsummer madness had got into our blood. It made us reckless for every risk. But, even at its very climax, we should have become so-

ber had it occurred to us that the outcome might be—murder."

"Constance, what are you saying?" he cried horror-struck.

"I will make room—clear out and away," was her phrase. Horace, there could be no doubt as to her meaning. She might have been as frantic in her grief as we were in our joy, but on this one point, as I live, she was sane. She came to pour her last will and testament into my ears. 'Let him live happy,' was her cry, 'and I shall die happy.'"

"Did she say that?" he murmured, dazed.

"And more loyal, more womanly," continued Lady Hamardine, ignoring his interruption, "was the motive she put forward. It was no wounded vanity, no petty chagrin at having lost her rightful place. It was to keep you on the pedestal she had helped you to climb. Oh, how mean and ignoble I looked by her side, I, who would have dragged your conscience in the mud of a dishonorable intrigue, who would have made you forfeit the right of thinking another honest thought—"

She paused abruptly, for she did not know if he still heard. He sat, his head bowed, his face in his hands.

"Yes, I believe I've said enough," she murmured, as though in answer to herself. Then she reached out her hand and touched him lightly on the shoulder. "Horace, for the sake of my own self-respect, don't let me be disappointed in you. Show yourself the man I took you to be."

He lifted his head and seemed pondering her words.

"Yes, Constance, I will," he said, quietly.

He rose, stepped over to his writing-desk, and unlocking a drawer, took from it her photograph. Silently he handed it to her, and she, in quite a matter-of-fact way, put it in her bag.

"That's the best answer you could

give me." Then she stood thinking, finger on lip. "Yes, I may as well finish my work," she said at last.

And before he could guess her intention she had opened the door, walked out, and a moment or two later returned with Maimie.

"Mrs. Critchett," she said, "I want to tell you that your husband will go with you next Sunday to Kensal Green—isn't that so?" she added, turning to him.

"To the end of the world, Maimie," he said, contrite and humble.

And then, smiling wanly, Lady Hamardine left them and found her way out into the street by herself. Upon her was a feeling of pride, like that of a skillful mechanic who has put back into working order a valuable piece of machinery that seemed to have gone hopelessly out of gear. But it had been tiring work—terribly tiring. She had spent all her strength on it. It seemed as if she would never again be able to stand by herself. Well, she need not. Even a reed, by careful handling, could be made into a prop. It only depended on herself.

She was back at Hamardine House, and at the bend of the staircase met her husband coming down. He stepped aside and, hat in hand, waited for her to pass by.

"I want you, Taffy," she said hurriedly.

He turned back obediently and followed her to her room.

"Will you wire to the yacht to get ready?" she asked.

"Ready for what?"

"For our trip to Norway. I want to go as soon as possible."

"Connie—is that the truth?" he exclaimed incredulously.

"Hush, Taffy. Don't remind me there's such a thing as falsehood in the world."

And Lord Hamardine was discreet enough not to ask her why.

The Kenmore Proxy

BY GEORGE HYDE PRESTON

Author of "The House Next Door," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY HERMANN C. WALL

HERE I am, Clark," said Lenway, as he walked briskly into the office of Garton and Company, dealers in western traction securities, and threw his bag into a corner.

"Hello, Lenway, glad to see you," returned the office manager. "Come in here where it is quiet," he added, leading the way to his private room.

"What did the old man call me back for?" asked Lenway impatiently. "When I got his wire, I was headed for Denver to look after that consolidation matter, and I ought to be there this minute."

"That can wait, Tom," answered Clark. "There is something bigger on just now. Mr. Garton called you back to make him a detailed written report on the United Northwestern Traction properties that you inspected some time ago. You see, we now represent a controlling interest in the stock of the company," he added confidentially. "Mr. Garton finally persuaded Kenmore to give him his proxy for the big block of stock that he owns. That gives us control and places the Balmer crowd just where we want them. They will sing small from now on. The annual meeting takes place a week from to-day in the company offices two floors above us, and we will put in a board of directors that will carry out our development plans. Then there will be things doing with the properties, and you can go out there and do them."

"All right," nodded Lenway, "the sooner I get back there, the better it will suit me. Hang New York anyway," he added with his breezy laugh, "you can't stretch your arms here without hit-

ting a skyscraper. New York seems like a mighty narrow sort of place, Clark, after a man has been walking around in the big West."

The manager smiled tolerantly on this heresy, for Lenway was a favorite in the office. He was the field man of the concern, the man on the firing line—diplomat and grim scrapper by turns, who went out into the West and fought the firm's battles at many a stormy meeting of boards of directors. Just now he was nervously drumming on the table with his knuckles.

"Well," he said, "I will make up my report in double quick time and be off. It ought not to take me more than a day, or two at most. As you size it up there isn't chance enough for a scrap at the meeting to make it sufficiently interesting to wait for."

"Not with the Kenmore proxy in our hands," answered Clark comfortably. "You had better go in and see Mr. Garton now. He is in his private office."

"All right," nodded Lenway. "By the way, Clark, who is that dapper little person with the ah-ah limp in his voice who was dictating to one of the stenographers as I came in?"

"A new man named Palman. He came just after you started on your last trip. He is Mr. Garton's private secretary. He took Haines' place, who quit to go into the real-estate business."

"Private secretary, is he?" grunted Lenway.

"Yes," smiled the manager; "what's the matter with him? He came well recommended."

"I don't know as anything is, but I

don't like his kind," frowned Lenway. "He wouldn't fit in out West," he added brusquely as he turned on his heel.

When he came out of Mr. Garton's office, he had his hands full of papers.

"I wish you would give me your room for a while, Clark—and a stenographer," he said. "I want to get into this job in a hurry."

"All right," answered the manager.

"Send me a good one, please. The best you have," Lenway added, going into Clark's room. "You know, when I get to dictating, the pencil has to travel."

When the stenographer came in, she was new to Lenway also, at least he did not remember one of them with grey eyes like—but what had grey eyes to do with United Northwestern Traction? The question was, could she take rapid-fire dictation? She could, and Lenway caught himself watching a small, nimble hand as it raced across the pad.

Right in the middle of a sentence, the door opened and a voice said, "Ah-ah, Miss Morris, when you have finished, I have some work for you." It was Palman.

"Miss Morris will be busy on my work all day," snapped Lenway.

"Ah-ah, perhaps some other stenographer would—"

"Do for you?" cut in Lenway. "Yes, quite so. Now, Miss Morris, where was I?" he asked, turning his back square on Palman.

As the door closed, Lenway fancied that he caught a look of amused relief in the gray eyes, but he was not sure because they were so swiftly lowered.

"I wonder if the little scrub annoys her?" he thought, and a valuable paper was involuntarily crumpled in his fist.

"There, Miss Morris, that is enough to keep you busy for some time," he said finally. "Make three copies, please. Now if you will take a short letter to Jackson and Company, Denver, that will be all till this afternoon. I wish you would be kind enough to typewrite the letter first, as I have an appointment and want to sign it before I go out."

When the letter was laid on his desk, he looked at the "Dictated T. L.—A. M." in the corner.

"What does the 'A' stand for, I wonder," he found himself speculating. "'Amy,' or 'Alice,' or what?" Then with a laugh he sprawled his signature across the paper and walked out of the office, biting the end off a cigar as he went.

"She is too nice to be bothered by that little Palman," he frowned as he walked up Wall street.

The preparation of the report somehow took a longer time than he had mentioned in his conversation with Clark. Not that Miss Morris was slow. Quite the contrary. "She is the best stenographer that I ever saw!" Lenway ejaculated to himself enthusiastically.

"That seems to be a long report that you are making," said the manager to him one morning. "At this rate, you will be here over the meeting after all."

"Well, you see," answered Lenway, "as I get into it, I find that there are some—er—ramifications that need tracing out and putting into shape."

Clark nodded.

"And so I thought I might as well stay and make a good job of it," added Lenway. "And now, Miss Morris, where was I?" he asked, as he returned very cheerfully to his dictation.

And then as he went on and on about mileage and bonds and betterments, he caught himself absently watching a graceful, brown head bent a little forward and a small hand moving swiftly across the pad.

"I dictate like a farmer!" he ejaculated as he found himself at sea in the middle of a sentence. "I don't know what's the matter with me."

It was the day before the meeting when the report was finally completed and in Mr. Garton's hands.

"I might as well stay over now, Clark, and see what the old man does to Balmer," laughed Lenway.

"Yes, of course," nodded Clark. "Balmer is foxy," he added reflectively, "and you never can tell what he has up his sleeve, but we have the dead medicine



"Miss Morris will be busy on my work all day," snapped Lenway

for him this time. I saw him yesterday, and he looked worried. Probably he knows that Kenmore has swung over to us. He has a way of nosing out things, confound him."

Lenway was among the last to leave the office that evening, and, as he reached the street, he noticed Palman a few steps in front of him. Palman quickened his pace just then, and Lenway, glancing ahead, saw Miss Morris standing on the corner palpably awaiting some one.

"She can't be waiting for that little cad!" ejaculated Lenway involuntarily. "No, by Jove, of course she isn't," he scoffed at himself, as he saw her parry Palman's elaborate bow with a distant nod of recognition and half turn away as he passed.

As Lenway came up, Miss Morris

took a hesitating step forward with a look that was half appealing, half frightened.

"May I detain you for a moment, Mr. Lenway?" she said.

"Yes, certainly, Miss Morris. I hope nothing has happened," he added, answering the look of trouble in her eyes.

"I am afraid that there has," she replied with a nervous tremble in her voice. "I have lost the Kenmore proxy."

"Lost it?" echoed Lenway.

"Yes, I was in Mr. Garton's office this afternoon making a list of the proxies for him, and, after I had finished, he told me to take them out and have them put in the safe. Just as I came from his room, there was a telephone call for me, and I laid the proxies

on my desk for a moment while I answered it. When I turned to pick them up, the Kenmore proxy was gone. It was the top one."

"Did you look carefully through them?" asked Lenway. "It may have slipped down under."

"Yes, I went through them again and again."

"Was there a breeze? It may have blown away."

"No, there was not a breath of air. You know how hot it was this afternoon," she added, turning a tired face to his. "Besides, I looked everywhere."

Lenway nodded. He was thinking rapidly. The loss of the Kenmore proxy meant the loss of control of the meeting, and he knew it.

"Who were near you at the time, Miss Morris?" he asked.

"There were a good many about the office, of course. I did not see anyone in particular, but my face was turned away while I was telephoning. I inquired if anyone had seen a stray paper."

"Did you tell Clark?"

"No, he had gone. He was called away to Newark on some business this afternoon."

"And Mr. Garton?"

"I didn't dare," faltered Miss Morris. "I hoped that I could find it somewhere in the morning. The meeting is not till eleven. I know that I ought not to bother you about it," she went on, "but I didn't know what to do, and I thought perhaps that you—"

"Of course," put in Lenway heartily. "I'm mighty glad you have told me. Suppose we go back to the office and take another look around. Everybody has gone by now and we will take a good look."

The office seemed strangely silent and deserted with its rows of closed desks, and with no typewriters rattling and no telephone bells jangling.

They looked everywhere. They explored Miss Morris's desk from top to bottom. They emptied the waste-paper baskets and combed the contents without result.

"We may as well give it up for to-night, Miss Morris," said Lenway at last.

"I suppose so," she answered dejectedly.

"By Jove!" exclaimed Lenway. "I am stupid. Kenmore could wire a proxy, if we could reach him. He lives in St. Louis, doesn't he?"

"Yes, but just now he is in the interior of Labrador, hunting. I heard Mr. Clark say so."

"That knocks out the wiring," said Lenway. "Well," he went on cheerfully, "the best thing for you to do is to go home

and go to sleep. The proxy may turn up all right, you know. I will be down in the morning, and if it does not, I will tell Mr. Garton myself. I know him pretty well, you see, and he—"

"Oh, no," she protested, "I cannot let you take my troubles on your shoulders."

"I would like to," he responded earnestly, "and now if you will tell me which way you go home I will see you to your train."

"I take the East Side elevated."

Lenway left her at the Hanover Square station with a cheery "good-night" and an injunction not to worry, and then turned away to worry, himself.

"What in thunder has become of the thing?" he puzzled as he ate his solitary dinner. "The deuce will be to pay! Poor little thing; she is all broken up over it."

And when he went to bed, he could not sleep for thinking of the proxy—and of her. "There must be *some* way out of it," he muttered as he turned restlessly from side to side. "Phew, what a hot night!" he exclaimed.



He caught the flash of a bull's-eye straight in the face

Finally he got up and sat in the dark staring at the twinkling lights across the park.

"This wont do," he thought. "I must have some sleep."

As he took a step toward the bed, he caught the flash of a bull's-eye, not six feet away, straight in his face!

Lenway's mind worked like a hair trigger. He made a dive for the legs under the light and upset his man.

The lantern clattered to the floor.

"Oh, no, you don't!" exclaimed Lenway, as he sunk sinewy fingers into the intruder's throat. "I'll trouble you for that gun that you are trying to pull; and now," he added, as he dragged the man across the room and pushed the electric button, "I'll take a look at you, if you don't mind."

The fellow blinked in the sudden blaze of light.

"Well," remarked Lenway genially, "you are a quiet stepper, all right. I didn't hear you at all, and I was wide awake. How long have you been here? What have you got? Empty out your pockets on that table."

"I aint got nothing," muttered the man. "I just come."

"Well, empty them just for luck, and turn them inside-out, too."

The man obeyed sullenly.

"A pair of brass knuckles, a stick-pin, a bunch of keys, a—jimmy, I guess—and a pocket-book," enumerated Lenway. "None of them mine, though the stick-pin looks familiar somehow. You must have been calling somewhere else this evening," he added. "I will just take a look into that pocket-book. No, don't move!" he admonished sharply. "I am a pretty good shot, and you know whether this gun is loaded or not."

Lenway opened the pocket-book. "A roll of bills," he began as he took out the contents. "Quite a haul you made, my predatory friend," he smiled. "Some papers," he went on. "A letter addressed to—hello! 'H. Bennett Palman!' That is why the stick-pin looked so familiar. It is the one he had on to-day. Nothing else much," he added as he turned over the papers, "except these—Good Lord!"

he broke off suddenly, his voice trembling with excitement, "the Kenmore proxy!"

He turned sharply on the thief. "Where did you get this pocket-book?" he demanded. "Quick, now, the truth!" he added with a motion of the gun.

"I got it out of a room a ways down from here, off a man who is a blamed sight better sleeper than you are," growled the thief.

Lenway was devouring the paper with his eyes. "The Kenmore proxy! Wont she jump for joy! But, by Jove, Palman!" he half whispered. "I knew he was a cur—but this!"

There was a sudden noise in the room.

Lenway jerked up his head in time to see the thief throw open the door and bolt into the hall.

Lenway stood still. "I suppose it's my duty as a citizen to chase him," he grinned, "but I'm not going to do it. It would be as bad as knocking down a man who had just handed me a million dollars. The Kenmore proxy! I had rather have it than the best million that I ever heard of!" he exclaimed enthusiastically.

He looked at his watch. "Two o'clock. Well, it is rather late to look her up, even if I had her address," he smiled. "Poor little girl, I'll bet she isn't sleeping much either, but it will be all right to-morrow. But by Jove, Palman!" he repeated as he turned toward the bed. "What's the answer? Why, the answer is Balmer, of course. It was necessary to his game that the proxy disappear and he got Palman to do the dirty work for him. It is as plain as print, and it is not the first trick of the kind that the old fox has figured in if reports are true, but this is the time that he will find he has slipped up. I am inclined to think that the meeting to-morrow will be quite interesting after all," smiled Lenway grimly, as he tumbled into bed.

As he sped toward Wall Street on a subway express the next morning, the roar of the train sounded like a song of triumph. He did not mind the crowd. He did not feel the stifling heat. He was rehearsing to himself just how he would

walk up and hand her the proxy, and was picturing just how those gray eyes would light up—the look of relief—the joy—the—

Suddenly the lights snapped out and the train slowed down and stopped in the darkness.

"Confound it, what's happened now!" he exclaimed.

In a few moments, a guard came through and hung a feeble lantern at the end of the car.

"What's the trouble?" demanded Lenway.

"Don't know," answered the guard. He was non-committal and uninterested.

The minutes passed. The passengers were becoming restive and impatient.

"Look here, guard," said Lenway, "why can't you open the door and give us a chance to walk to the next station?"

"Can't do it," answered the guard shortly. "It's against orders."

"It is mighty important for me to get down town," urged Lenway. "You can't keep us here all day."

The guard shrugged his shoulders.

Lenway looked at his watch. It was ten o'clock.

"Look here, guard," he said in a low tone, "I will give you ten dollars, if you will let me squeeze through."

The guard shook his head. "I don't believe we'll be tied up much longer though," he volunteered with better nature.

He was mistaken, however. Ten-thirty came, then eleven, and still not a wheel turned.

"The meeting is on," groaned Lenway, "and here I am tied up with the proxy in my pocket, and she is crying her eyes out!" He was desperate. He stepped toward the guard. "Come on, you men who want to get out of here before night," he cried. "We will make this guard open the door, or open it ourselves!"

There was an angry murmur of assent and the crowd was pressing forward, when suddenly the lights flashed on and there was a ringing of bells.

"You can get off now, gents, if you

want to," grinned the guard, as the train started.

The crowd, good natured again, laughed.

When they reached the Wall Street station, Lenway dashed up the stairs and down the street to the office.

As he opened the door, he looked toward Miss Morris' desk. She was not there.

"Where is Miss Morris, Clark?" he demanded breathlessly.

"She has just gone up to the United Northwestern meeting with some papers for Mr. Garton," answered the manager.

"How long is the meeting open for voting?" asked Lenway, turning swiftly, his hand on the knob of the door.

"Till one o'clock, but there is the devil to pay, Lenway. The Kenmore proxy is missing and can't be—"

But Lenway heard no more, for before there was time to finish the sentence, he was across the hall frantically pushing the elevator button.

When, a moment later, he hastily opened the door of the room where the meeting was being held, he nearly ran into Miss Morris, who was coming out.

"I've got it!" His words came quick and sharp.

"What!" Her low voiced exclamation was vibrant with surprise and joy. Her hands came together in a little ecstatic gesture, and her eyes shone straight into his like—like—

Lenway pulled himself together—"Don't go," he whispered tensely. "Stay and see the fireworks!"

He took a rapid survey of the room.

Mr. Garton was sitting by a table placidly smoking a cigar and smiling at something his neighbor was saying.

"Cool as a cucumber," muttered Lenway, admiringly, "and he thinks that Balmer has him beaten out sure. The old man is dead game, all right!"

Then Lenway glanced at Palman, who sat fidgeting nervously in a chair that was too big for him, and then over his head at Balmer, who stood, a tall, bony figure, by the window talking to a knot of his supporters. He was also smil-



"And here is a pocket-book that you lost at the same time," he went on deliberately

ing, the confident smile of the man who wins.

"The old fox," muttered Lenway, "he thinks that he has turned the trick."

Then Lenway stepped forward. "Mr. Garton," he said in an even voice, "here is the proxy that you were asking for."

Mr. Garton glanced at the paper over his glasses, and then flicked the ash from his cigar. "Oh, yes," he said casually. "Thank you, Lenway."

"Good sport!" muttered Lenway under his breath.

Mr. Garton turned to the secretary of the meeting.

"Here is the proxy of Amos Kenmore to me for two thousand shares," he said deliberately, tossing the proxy across the table. "I vote it for the same directors for whom I have voted the balance of the stock that I represent. Here is the ballot," he added, tossing a slip of paper after the proxy.

Balmer started forward. "The Kenmore proxy!" he exclaimed. "Let me see it! I don't believe—" He suddenly checked himself and bit his lip. "Oh, yes, the Kenmore proxy," he tried to smile, as he stared at the paper. "You were so late voting it, you see, Garton, that I thought you didn't have it—that is, have any more proxies to vote," he ended, trying to carry it off easily, but his mouth twitched, and as he turned, Lenway caught the furtive, venomous glance he shot at Palman, who sat clutching the arms of his chair with nervous hands.

Under cover of the buzz of excited comment that went through the room, Garton turned to Lenway and said in a low voice, "Where did you find it?"

"It is too long a story to tell you here," returned Lenway in the same guarded voice, "but I will tell you this much, right now," he added tensely. "Palman took it! Of course, Balmer put him up to it, but I haven't got the goods on the old fox yet."

Mr. Garton started violently. "Take care what you say, Lenway!" he ejaculated. "Balmer would work a trick like that if he got a chance, of course. But Palman! My secretary! Impossible!"

Garton's eyebrows met in a straight, angry line. "Prove it, Lenway," he demanded, "or take it back!"

"I will prove it," retorted Lenway grimly. He took something from his pocket and holding it up, called across to Palman, "Here is a stick-pin I found, Mr. Palman. One that I have seen you wearing. Allow me to return it."

"Ah-ah, yes," stammered Palman. "Thank you. I—I lost it yesterday."

"Last night," corrected Lenway. "And here is a pocket-book that you lost at the same time," he went on deliberately. "You will find the contents intact—with one exception. I will tell you what that is, if you like. Shall I?"

Mr. Garton's eyes flashed for an instant into Lenway's and then rested coldly on his secretary.

Palman staggered weakly to his feet. "Ah-ah—I feel ill," he muttered. "The—the tobacco smoke—the close air—I think I will go out."

"And if I were you," snapped Garton, "I would keep right on down to the street. You will find the air in my office even worse for you than this."

As the door closed on Palman, Garton faced Balmer with an ugly glint in his eyes. "Some proxies are like cats, Balmer," he said, contemptuously. "They come back!"

Lenway turned and glanced quickly at Miss Morris.

She was standing close by the door, bending forward, eagerly intent upon the scene. Her cheeks were pink and her eyes shone with excitement.

As she caught Lenway's glance, she flashed a sudden, radiant smile of thanks straight at him.

He caught his breath. "Oh, by Jove," he murmured softly to himself as he took an involuntary step toward her, "she doesn't know what she is doing to me when she smiles like that!"

Then he squared his shoulders with decision.

"I intend to stay right here in New York," he announced to himself firmly, "until I find out two things: what the 'A' stands for, and whether she will let me call her by it!"

The Blind God

BY JAMES OLIVER CURWOOD

author of "Steele of The Royal Mounted," etc.

CORPORAL SYLVESTER DUCK, of the Royal Northwest Mounted Police, drew one hand across his face, looked again at the thermometer between his fingers, and swore softly to himself in the tone of one to whom had come a mystery beyond his understanding. After a moment his eyes met Jossman's. Jossman was old at the game of man-hunting. Eleven years he had been in the service; twelve times he had broken new trails by snow-shoe and dog-sledge to the Arctic. He did not know fear. He had run down many men. A score of times he had faced death. But in his face there had never been the look that the other saw there now. It was not fright. It was more than that—the look of a man who for the first time beholds an abyss too deep for the earth, a mountain too tall for the heavens. His face was the face of a man rendered stunned and expressionless by a thing which it was impossible to comprehend, almost madness to contemplate.

"What does it say, Sylver?" he asked.

"A degree and a half above zero," replied Corporal Duck.

"And this morning—seven hours ago—it was *sixty below*! Sylver, they'll never believe this at headquarters when we report it. They'll call us mad, and furlough us for our health. But you'd better make a memo. of it. We're just about on the sixty-seventh degree, two hundred miles from the Arctic coast, a thousand due north of the northernmost civilization. Tab it, Sylver, for God's sake, tab it—even if they do call us mad. I half believe we are!"

Corporal Duck sat down on the edge of the dog-sledge, close to the fire which they had built in front of their tent. From his pocket he drew the worn re-

port-book in which, each night, he laboriously and painstakingly wrote down the important events of the day. From another pocket he produced the stub of a pencil.

Jossman went back among the dogs and fed the famished huskies a dozen frozen fish. Then he cleaned up the supper things. By the time he was done, Corporal Duck had finished his writing.

"This beats the frozen whaler we found three years ago," he said, as he gave Jossman the report-book. "They couldn't believe it when we told them of finding the captain sitting at his table, frozen stiff as iron, and with a pen in his hand. What'll the Inspector and the Big Mogul down at Regina say to *this*?"

Jossman read slowly, and aloud:

December 13, 1910. Several times to-day Jossman and I have asked ourselves if we can be in our right minds. Since morning we have entered into an experience and passed through a change which are unlike anything that have ever been reported in the far North. We rose this morning at dawn (seven o'clock). At that time, thirty-five miles south of this spot, our thermometer registered sixty-two and a quarter degrees below zero. Toward noon we began to feel a curious quality in the air. It was warmth. At first we thought our thermometer had gone wrong, and that the sensation of warmth was in reality caused by the intense cold numbing our bodies. So we built fires at frequent intervals. But the thermometer continued to rise thirty degrees in the first five hours. By the end of the sixth hour we were compelled to throw off our heavy coats. The dogs began to pant as they dragged the sledge, and the snow grew soft under our feet. An hour ago (three o'clock P.M.) we discarded our snowshoes. Occasionally we felt warm currents of air in our faces, blowing directly from the

North. Jossman says that he has detected the odors of vegetation and flowers in the air. This must be his imagination. Within the last ten miles the trees have doubled in size, vegetation is as dense as five hundred miles south, and in places we have found the ground bare of snow. The thermometer now stands at a degree and a half above zero, a rise in the temperature of sixty-three and three-quarters degrees in seven hours, and to-night we have a temperature fifty-two degrees warmer than any previous record in this latitude at this season of the year. Warm air is blowing from the North, and within the space of half an hour our thermometer varies from three to seven degrees. The dogs are nervous, and are constantly sniffing toward the North. During the day we have struck balsam and poplar, whose northernmost limits are supposed to be three or four hundred miles south. I beg to report that we must now be at about the sixty-seventh degree, in the heart of the big unexplored country north of the Great Bear, and between the Mackenzie and the McFarlane.

When he had finished reading, Jossman slowly filled and lighted his pipe.

"You know the stories of the Indians," he said. "I remember an old fellow who came into Fort Good Hope seven or eight years ago, just after we discovered the frozen mastodon on Hare Indian River. We were feeding the meat to the dogs. We laughed at him when he said there was a hot country far to the north where those animals still lived, and that he had seen their tracks. He stayed one night—and was gone. We never saw him again."

"Rot!" said Corporal Duck.

"You don't believe it?"

"I believe your story—but not the mastodon business. They've been dead for ten thousand years."

"But you ate mastodon meat down at Fort Wrigley."

"Yes—taken out of a ten thousand year old ice-box. That's what this country is, Jossy—an ice-box, when you get four feet below the surface. When we die and are buried up here our friends can dig us up a thousand years later and we'll look natural. That's the one and only advantage of living north of sixty-six."

Jossman had risen to his feet.

"Did you catch that, Sylver?"

"The warmth? Yes. It's queer—damned queer."

Both men looked off into the night.

"I wish there had been an hour more of daylight," said Jossman. "I don't feel like—going to bed. In an hour more—"

"We'd have been smearing our boots in strawberries," interrupted Corporal Duck, trying to laugh. "I'm going to bed."

His companion placed a detaining hand on his arm.

"Do you hear anything, Sylver?"

"No."

"Smell anything?"

"No."

"Look—" He pointed one long arm to the North, where the pale, steely flashes of the aurora borealis were beginning to lighten up the sky. "Did you ever see the lights look like that, Sylver—as though there were some sort of a gauzy curtain between us and them? Looks like a mist—"

"I'm going to bed," reiterated Corporal Duck. "Better turn in, Jossy. We'll find out what it means to-morrow."

He turned and disappeared into their little service tent. But Jossman remained where he was.

II

For many minutes after Corporal Duck left him Jossman stood without moving, gazing off to the North. After a time he quietly got his blanket, wrapped it about him, and sat down near the fire. Jossman had run up against enough of the mysteries of life to be a little superstitious. He was thirty-two, and it was his fault that he had not a corporalship or a sergeancy, a choice rather than a fault. He had declined both when they had been offered him because he knew that they would bar him, to a large extent, from that wilder and more adventurous service which he loved—the actual service of man-hunting. He had no taste for office work. He had joined the Service because of his passion for a wild and adventurous life,

and he had no desire to give up that life for a stripe or two on his sleeve. But different thoughts had been running through his head for several days. Now, for the first time in his life he was homesick; so homesick that his heart ached, and he was filled with a deep longing to turn back. At Fort Good Hope he had received a letter. It was two months old when it reached him, and had come from the girl, whom, long ago, he had believed that he would marry. It was curious, he had often thought, that a girl should love a man as this girl loved him. In that letter she had talked to him in the same old way. He could read her heart, still true and loyal in its waiting, in the words she wrote. Often he had cursed himself for not caring a great deal. But at last the truth had come home to him, and with the truth both pain and joy. He had written to her before starting on this expedition, and a dozen times since then when Corporal Duck was not looking he had re-read her letter. To-night, as he gazed into the fire, he saw once more the old farm among the hills, and the little white cottage in the valley, fifteen hundred miles away. He saw the girl again, as he had seen her on that last day three years ago, when the big orchard was in bloom, and the larks were singing their mating-song about them in the meadows. He saw her blue eyes shining at him from out a wreath of apple blossoms; he saw her brown hair disheveled and flying in the sunlight as they ran a race for home; and he saw, then, those blue eyes, sad and fighting back the tears, when the hour of parting came.

Corporal Duck was asleep when finally Jossman raised his head and looked out beyond the fire. He had heard no sound, and yet something had come up close to him from out of the stillness of the night. A white and terrified face met his eyes. It was a woman's face. He sprang up, stifling a cry of astonishment on his lips. For a moment the woman did not move, but stared at him with panting bosom and parted lips through which her breath came in gasps. She

had been running. He knew that in an instant. Her long black hair had fallen loose about her. Her black eyes were shining wildly, and her hands were clutched at her breast, as though she were striving to fight back her exhaustion so that she could speak. She was a white woman. Jossman stood like one paralyzed. At first he thought that what he saw must be a vision born of the pictures he had seen in the fire. He drew back half a step, and then she spoke.

"Thank God," he heard her cry, softly. "I thought you were—Indians. I saw your fire—"

She saw his astonishment, and thrust back her hair so he could see her face.

"I know—I startle you," she said, gaining her breath. "We live back there—three miles—my husband and I, and the baby. She is sick—my little Jeanne. I am afraid she is dying. I saw your fire, and ran all the way. We must have medicine—quick! You have medicines—something for the fever—"

She was gripping him by the arms now, her face tense with agony as she waited for him to answer.

"Yes, we have medicines," he said almost mechanically. "But who—"

"Please, please don't question me now," she interrupted, reading what was in his face. "I will tell you everything—answer all your questions—as we go. Please get the medicines, and hurry!"

"She is very ill?" he persisted.

"Yes—yes—I am afraid she is dying. It is some kind of a fever."

"And it is only three miles?"

"Yes—we can make it in half an hour. My God, wont you hurry?"

In an instant Jossman had made up his mind. He turned quickly and entered the tent. Corporal Duck was still asleep. Careful not to disturb him, he secured their rubber medicine bag. In another moment he was again at the woman's side.

"We can harness the dogs," he suggested.

"In another mile there will be no snow," she replied quickly. "We must walk—and run."

"No snow," he repeated, as she led him swiftly away. "What do you mean?"

"The springs," she said, "hot springs. You must know. There are thousands of them, for twenty miles to the north and west. We never have snow. It is always warm. The streams run with warm water; some of them are hot. Our name is Norton, and we came here three years ago. We are the only ones. No one else lives here."

She spoke in short, quick breaths. Suddenly she added, "We call it our Blind Eden."

"Why 'blind?' " he asked.

"Because—" He caught the throb in her voice. "Because *he* is blind—my husband. He was blind when we came here. He has never seen it."

"Good Heaven!" he gasped.

He did not question her further, but his mind was working in a whirlwind of thought. The mystery that had puzzled him had resolved itself down to a matter of ordinary fact, replaced now by this other mystery—the mystery of the man and woman. Who were they? What curious swing of fate had brought them alone to this place, a thousand miles from civilization? He knew that his companion was not even a half-breed. Her voice, a little tremulous with excitement and fear, was exquisitely perfect. The quick working of his mind impelled him to conceal his own identity, and Corporal Duck's, when she suddenly asked:

"And who—who are you? What brings *you* here?"

He detected a strange note in her voice as she asked the question, and her face was turned to him, white and tense.

"Prospectors," he said. "Fool prospectors."

She almost ran now. The air was growing warmer with a swiftness that would have amazed him if he had not understood the cause. In places the snow was soft and slushy. He drew off his coat, and carried it. His head began to sweat under his heavy cap. Twice he saw misty vapors rising out of the earth, a little to one side, where the springs

were pouring forth their subterraneously heated waters. The woman seemed tireless, and yet he could hear her panting. Her long hair almost concealed her face when she stopped at last on the summit of a ridge, and pointed down.

"Our home is there," she said, "in the valley. See—the light—"

He caught the glimmer of a light far down, and followed her swift lead along a winding path. Fifteen minutes later they stood in an open meadow. The ground was bare of snow. The air was of the softness of spring, but damp.

"We have found a cold spring here," she said. "So this is our home."

A hundred paces more and they came to the cabin. The door was open and the girl ran in, followed by Jossman. As they entered, a man rose from beside a low cot to greet them. He reached out his arms toward the girl, and Jossman saw that he was blind. He was a tall, powerful man, with a great blond head, and a face that even now lighted up with a smile of happiness.

"Sh-h-h-h!" he warned softly. "She is better, my darling. Thank God, she is sleeping!"

The young mother turned to Jossman, scarce restraining the cry of joy and thankfulness that rose to her lips. Then for a moment she stood transfixed, while a wild horror filled her eyes.

Jossman was staring at the man. His lips were parted; one hand had fallen to the butt of his automatic revolver; there was the sudden glare of the awakened man-hunter in his eyes. In that one instant Jossman had solved the mystery. And the woman knew that he had solved it. She swayed a little. Her face turned as white as chalk. And Jossman still stared into the smiling and unseeing countenance of the man—the countenance of Richard Colton, the murderer, who had escaped from his own detachment four years before.

The fatal words of accusation on his lips, he turned. His eyes met those of the woman. Mutely she pointed to the cot where the sick child lay, and in her big, dark eyes he saw the plea which

she dared not utter in words. He nodded, and the chilly glitter in his own eyes gave place to a smile.

She went to her husband and placed her hands upon his broad shoulders.

"I found them, dear," she said gently. "They were white men, and I've brought one of them back—with medicines."

The man held out his hand, and as Jossman took it, a shudder ran through him. Colton had killed two men. His escape had saved him from hanging. He spoke a few words, in a low voice, but Jossman was not listening. The woman held him—the terror in her eyes, the straight, fierce line of her bloodless lips, the clenching of her hands at her breast. She did not for an instant let her gaze fall from his face, and Jossman wondered, as he turned his back, if she would shoot. He bent over the child. She was sleeping. The fever flush was still in her cheeks, and her golden curls shone in the lamplight. He was sufficiently acquainted with fever to know that the crisis had passed for the child while the mother was away. He listened—touched her face; then he felt the quivering presence of the woman near him.

"She is better?" she whispered.

"Yes, you will have no need of the medicine," he replied. "The crisis has passed, and she is sleeping—well."

He lifted his glance slowly. The woman's face was so close that he could feel her breath. Back of them, in the center of the room, stood the man, waiting.

"I am sorry," he whispered so that only she could hear, "but I must take him back. He is Richard Colton. We have wanted him a long time—for murder."

There was no change in the woman's face, but he saw that she was struggling to remain calm, as she whispered:

"Not now—not now. Give us a few hours longer—only a few hours—until morning— You—will—do—that. My God, you can't take him now—with little Jeanne—sick!"

"I will wait," he said,

The man was advancing, a questioning look in his sightless face.

"Bernice!" he said.

She ran to him and threw her arms about his neck, and laid her sobbing head upon his breast. Tenderly Colton stroked her shining hair.

"She is better?" he asked, speaking to Jossman.

"The danger is past."

"Thank God!"

He pressed his face close down against the woman's and when again he raised it, Jossman saw the dampness of tears on his cheeks.

"Sit down," he said. "Sit down—and talk to us. We haven't heard a white man's voice in—a long time."

Jossman seated himself and the woman brought another chair for her husband. Then she sat down on a stool at his feet, and the blind man's hand rested on her head. For a long time they talked in low voices, he asking questions chiefly, and Jossman answering them, while the woman sat white-faced and silent, her eyes burning straight into Jossman's soul. A hundred times he told himself that she would not give up. At the very last there would be the fight—with the woman.

Suddenly Colton leaned forward; his cheeks were flushed.

"Do you know," he said, "years ago I could never have believed that a blind man could be happy. But I—am. I am happier now than I ever was in the days when I could see—and shoot, and watch the world around me. You don't know—until you are blind—how deeply the old pictures are burned in your brain. They are all masterpieces. I remember the first time I saw Bernice—my wife—and the picture grows more perfect each day. It was in an orchard, and the apple trees were in bloom, just as—"

"Just as I saw a girl once," Jossman interrupted, scarcely hearing his own speech. "In an orchard, with her brown hair flying—"

"Yes, yes, with her hair loose and flying about her," almost laughed the blind man. "I will always know her as

I saw her then, even when she is old and gray. That is the glory of being blind. I will always see her beautiful golden hair, her laughing blue eyes—"

"Golden hair—blue eyes—" gasped Jossman.

Into the woman's face had shot a look of death. Her hair was black, her eyes deep, jet dark pools of agony. He caught his words, and in that moment she gave him a sign which he obeyed, but could not understand.

"Yes, her golden hair and blue eyes," repeated the blind man. He lifted a handful of his wife's heavy hair and let it slip between his fingers fondly. "I can see it now—even more clearly than you. I can see it in the sunlight and in the shadow. To me she will never change, because I am blind—"

An hour later, out in the darkness of the night, the woman stood close to Jossman's side.

"You shall not take us back—alive," she said. "Listen, and I will tell you why. He is mine. I worship him. And he is happy with me—you have seen that. He thinks that my eyes are blue, and that my hair is gold! My God, I must tell you—tell you—and then—perhaps you will have mercy. I loved him down there—years ago—and he loved the other. She was Bernice. It was she who had the golden hair and the blue eyes. And then he fought that day, and killed two men. It was not he who was in the wrong—but he killed, as you might have killed, and you have hunted him. An explosion—in a mine—and he was blinded. I went to him then, and when I dropped down at his bedside and began to sob, he put his poor hand out and stroked my hair, and then he started up, and said, 'Bernice—Bernice—is it you?'"

"You—you understand—I loved him so! I have been Bernice ever since. I took him away when he was well, and we were married, where no one knew us. After that we came far north, and the

police ran him down. You know—how he escaped. I got the Indians to help, and we came north—north—north—until we reached this place. It was I who came to him when he was man-hunted; it was I who went to him when he was blind—only a week after Bernice had married a man who could see. He is mine. I robbed no one of him. My love is so great that I have done all this for him, and now—now do you think I will let you take him back?"

Jossman was breathing hard. Behind him there was a low, hissing monotone in the sky—the crackling music of the aurora, and he turned his face slowly toward it, and gazed at the pale radiance of the mystery lights above the Pole. What he saw was like a faded, age-old painting, and suddenly, as he looked, a low cry fell from him. For to his eyes the dimly colored sky resolved itself into a vast orchard that shaded the top of the earth, and out of that orchard there grew a single tree, over-topping all the rest, as he remembered a certain tree at home, under whose radiant blossoms he and a brown haired girl had smiled into each other's eyes many, many springs ago.

When at last he spoke, it was with a low huskiness in his throat.

"No, I don't think that you will let me take him back," he said softly and evenly. "You love him too much. You would fight. You would kill. And there is something else—" He turned upon her and caught her face between his two hands, staring down into her eyes. "There is a girl—down there—who loves *me*—as you love *him*. I am going back to her. And I am going to leave you—you and him and yours—here. Listen—"

He raised his head, still holding the woman's face between his hands. From far away there came a voice—Corporal Duck's voice.

"Good-by," he whispered.

Then he walked swiftly away through the gloom.



I did as he told me—it was empty!

The Queen of Sheba's Belt

BY EDGAR WALLACE

ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN NEWTON HOWITT

WE called Rensell "Annie" because he had a long and a melancholy face which bore some resemblance to that of the cook-general who combined with her high office the post of serving-maid at Seveidge's Boarding Establishment.

This was in the old days when we were all students together at the University, and before Annie threw up science and went out to India to be a policeman.

He was seven years in India, and we heard very little about him, and that little, we imperfectly appreciated.

We knew that he was engaged in more or less mysterious work connected with the political side of police work, and I remember that somebody sent me a copy

of the *Times of India* with a blue-penciled description of how Annie had saved the Rajah of Somewhere's life by unearthing a plot to poison his highness.

The exact particulars escape me for the moment, but I am under the impression that there was a woman in it and that Annie had done something very clever with a spoon and a reel of thread—but exactly what it was I forget.

The next news I had of him was that a political anarchist had thrown a bomb at him in Calcutta and I gathered therefrom that Annie had been sticking his long nose into matters which may have concerned him, but which certainly did not meet with the approval of those affected by his interference.

In a sense, such of us as had known him, found a new interest in his career after this happening.

That we included a detective of parts in our circle of acquaintance was a subject, if not exactly for congratulation, at least for interest.

Those who are best able to judge the qualities of our friend—Indian officials, judges and political chiefs—speak of Annie's work in terms of the highest respect. It would seem, in fact, that in the very shortest space of time he placed himself on a level with the most astute chiefs of the Criminal Investigation Department in India, and, moreover, accomplished this, handicapped with very little knowledge of the languages of the great empire.

I am speaking now of his earlier achievements; it is a fact that he did acquire a very extensive knowledge of Indian dialects.

You know how easy it is for youthful friends to drift apart, and for "Jack" to become "Mister," and especially was this so in my case, for although "Annie" and I had been friends, had shared slight confidences and had been mutually interested in the remnants of our month's allowances, we were so far disassociated by time and distance that on one occasion when I was asked to give a letter of introduction to him, I hesitated, wondering whether I could still describe him as a friend. It was soon after this that I had a letter from him, telling me that he was coming home on leave, asking me if I was still unmarried, and, if I was, whether I could fix up diggings for him.

I was delighted to reply that I should be glad to fix up some rooms for him. This I did, for I was staying with some very nice people in Kensington who had, fortunately, a suite available.

It was a remarkable coincidence that soon after this I began to hear more about him than I had heard in the whole of the seven years.

My work brought me a great deal into touch with Anglo-Indians, and never a day seemed to pass but I learnt of some brilliant little exploit of his in the

realms of crime detection and crime prevention.

He arrived in June, scarcely changed.

He had still the same melancholy cast of features, the same immobile face—a little browner, perhaps, but not looking a day older.

A cigarette dropped limply from his mouth when he came lounging into my office—I had not been able to meet him at the station—and the stray end of his badly-tied cravat hung brazenly over his waistcoat.

"Lo," he said with the air of indolence which was peculiarly his. He offered a thin hand and grasped mine with a twenty-pound grip, which was utterly at variance with his air of languor.

He was the sort of man who had the rare faculty for picking up the thread of a friendship exactly where he left it, and we found ourselves ragging each other just as though we still shared a small sitting-room at Seveidge's and the seven years' interval had never occurred.

His shrewdness, his extraordinary powers of observation, his brilliant simplicity, astounded me.

He spoke very little of his work in India, and I might never have realized the extent of his services but for the remarkable happenings at the Manufacturing Jewelers' Association—and but for the Queen of Sheba's Belt.

We were talking about crime detection one night when Annie was in his best form. We sat in my room over our pipes; I was endeavoring to draw him out.

"Crime in this country is Easy Money," he said, and shook his head regretfully. "If a burglary is committed you search for certain characteristics. If a ladder is used to effect an entrance, you look for A. B. or C. D.; if an entrance is gained by the butler's pantry you arrest E. F. or G. H. Criminals classify themselves in well defined groups, and the police have only to probe one group long enough and deep enough to come upon the criminal."

"But murder?" I asked.

"Murder is eccentric, I grant," he re-

plied; "but then in this law-abiding country the man who commits a murder usually gives himself up to the police or runs away, both of which courses are pretty fatal to his chance of dying of old age."

He knocked his pipe out on the fender—he was a most untidy man—and sighed.

"Look here."

He rose and left the room leaving me in a condition of piquant anticipation.

He returned in a few moments bringing with him a small box of cedar-wood.

It was about six inches long, four inches wide and two inches deep, and as I took it into my hand I was mostly impressed by its commonplace character.

Indeed, it looked like a well finished cigar-box, but being prepared for extraordinary things, I examined it carefully, tapped it, and, I believe, even went so far as to smell it!

He smiled.

"Suppose you went to search the house of a suspect," he said, and put the box on the table, "a man believed to be privy to an anarchistic plot, and you saw this box on the table—you'd open it in your search for compromising documents, wouldn't you?"

I nodded.

"Well, open it."

I rose from my chair, and lifted the lid.

When I say "lifted," perhaps that does not describe what happened, for as I slipped the little metal catch which fastened it, the lid flew open, for the box was crammed full of letters!

Annie enjoyed my astonishment, loudly.

"Rum, isn't it?" he asked.

He took the box from my hand and closed it, placing the little casket on the table.

"Of course, the owner of the box swore that he knew nothing about it—charged my inspector with having concealed the letters himself."

Annie paused and puffed away at his pipe.

"And he had," he said tersely; "did you see me put 'em in?"

"I must confess that I didn't," I admitted.

Annie smiled again.

"I saw the inspector," he said cheerfully. "You see things very quickly in our service."

"What did you do?"

"Well," explained Annie slowly, "it was a delicate position—I couldn't very well turn down one of my own men, could I? I just closed the box as you saw me close it a minute ago, put it down on the table and temporized. By and by—'Hand me that box, Lal Singh,' I said to the inspector, and he lifted it up—by the way, open that box again."

I did as he told me—it was empty!

Not a sign or a vestige of a letter was there to be seen.

Annie was amused.

"I took 'em out—did you see me?" he asked, then went on to tell of the discomfort of Lal Singh. "That sort of thing crops up—you can't avoid it."

In his slow, hesitating way he told me story after story of modern police work. Some were amusing, some were horribly gruesome, not a few were unprintable.

"So you see," said Annie with a yawn, "work on our side takes a bit of getting through. You have to be prepared for the very unlikely and grapple with the impossible. Here, all your crime is cut and dried; you know when it is coming along and you're prepared for it."

"Motive is concentrated in England; in India it is different. You might find a motive for a crime other than robbery, and find a dozen men who had the same motive—and then again you take such extraordinary precautions." He put his hand into the inside pocket of his jacket and produced a letter.

"Read this," he said.

I took it. It was a half-sheet of common note-paper, and bore no address or date. It ran:

This is to warn you that an attempt will be made to-morrow to abstract certain joolry. Be kareful about your workmen.

A Friend.

It was obvious that the writer had sought to disguise his handwriting.



I saw Lady Knitborough take the belt and look at it and her husband reach
impulsively to take it from her

"How did you get this?" I asked.

"It was given to me to-day by the secretary of the Manufacturing Jewelers' Association," he said. "I know the managing director of the firm—met him in India."

He folded up the letter and put it away.

"It was written by an educated person," he said, tapping his pocket. "One needn't be a magazine detective to know that criminals do not spell 'careful' with a 'k' or write 'jewelry' as 'joolry' and at the same time employ words like 'abstract.'"

The Manufacturing Jewelers' Association had recently removed their great works from Birmingham to London—to Lewisham, to be exact—and I remembered reading somewhere of the wonderful collection of ancient jewelry which they had exhibited at the official opening of the works a few weeks before.

I mentioned this fact to Annie and he nodded.

"That's the devil of it," he said, and relit his pipe. "This is the whole story, so far as I understood it. One J. M. A. is apparently the nineteen-gun-salute firm of the trade, and they've removed their works from Edinburgh to London for reasons which have nothing to do with the case, except that they are most anxious that their business should have a big boom."

"Well, apparently they've had it. I read a column about it the other day in the *Morning Post*. They had an ancient jewelry exhibition which attracted the archaeologists of Europe, and to-morrow they are entertaining the Guild of Science."

I nodded.

"Other attractions, too numerous to mention," Annie went on, "are promised, but in the meantime—"

He tapped his pocket again.

"It seems a simple matter," I said; "they've only to get a few plain-clothes officers—"

He shook his head.

"That is impossible. The managing director—you probably know Sir Philip

Gower—he says it is impossible, and I agree. If the members of the Guild weren't coming it *would* be simple, but their presence makes the plain-clothes man an absolute impossibility. You see," he went on, "it might leak out—get into the papers: 'Guild of Science watched by detectives'—fine bill for the newspapers—what?"

He shook his head again.

"No," he said. "Gower's plan is best; he has asked me down—you can come, too, if you promise to steal nothing."

I grinned dubiously at the harmless little joke and agreed.

The works of the Manufacturing Jewelers' Association are, as I have said, at Lewisham, occupying an extensive acreage on the banks of the tiny Ravensbourne—that historical rivulet.

We had no difficulty in finding the place; we might, as a matter of fact, have ridden thither for there were a dozen carriages waiting at Lewisham Station to convey the members of the Guild of Science to the factory. We walked, however, and on the way Annie explained to me what I had not known, that the Guild was an odd mixture of genuine scientists and fashionable folk who affected scientific leanings.

"So if you want to put 'F. G. S.' after your name," he said, "I'll be able to introduce you to Lord Knitborough, who is the president of the Guild, and is something of a whale on scarabs."

"Thank you," I replied; "I've got all the archaeology I want."

We entered the big gates of the factory and were shown to the offices of the association.

A large room near the gate had been decorated with flags and bunting and a big red carpet spread and in this the managing director was receiving his guests.

We did not join the party, but, under the guidance of a clerk who had evidently been instructed to take charge of us, we made our way to the board-room and sat down to await Sir Philip Gower's coming.

In ten minutes he came bustling in, a short, stout, red-faced man with a

ready smile, and shook hands energetically.

Annie introduced me.

"Ah," he smiled, "all you famous detectives have a biographer handy, eh? Glad to meet you, Mr. Staines."

He turned abruptly from me to my companion.

"I'm sorry to bring you down on an errand like this," he said apologetically. "Of course nobody is going to steal anything, but we've got half a million pounds worth of old jewelry—most of which is only lent to us—and I'm afraid we've been very careless about it. It is going back to town to-morrow—we decided that at a meeting we had yesterday."

"Seems a fairly intelligent scheme," said Annie dryly, "and in the meantime—?"

"In the meantime," said Sir Philip, "I want you to be here—in case. You see," he continued quickly, "we can't afford to offend any of these people who are here to-day—only twenty have turned up, thank Heaven!—because they are really top notch, and if they knew they were being watched it would do us no end of harm."

"I see," said Annie. "Now you can take us along and introduce us."

They were, in Annie's expressive language, a scratch lot. Nine of the twenty were ladies, of the average smart-woman type; the rest were men, only two being what I would describe as typical scientists, the remainder being of that class which anarchistic orators refer to as the "idle rich."

Lady Knitborough was a strikingly beautiful woman of thirty, but perhaps the most remarkable member of the party was Lord Knitborough himself.

He was, I should say, about forty-five years of age, very tall, and the sallowness of his complexion suggested that he had spent some period of his life in a fever country. Such was the case, I afterwards discovered. He had been governor of a West African state as a young man, not a particularly important post for a man of his attainments to secure, but the Knitboroughs were a poor

family and possessed little or no political influence.

He had a passion for archæology—you learnt that in a minute—and he talked volubly, almost excitedly, of a "find" he had made—it was an Assyrian amphora or something of the sort.

That there was perfect sympathy between him and his wife was easy enough to see. The hungry eyes which sought her face for approval, and the tender little smile which rewarded him, were eloquent of the complete understanding which was theirs.

I was impressed by these two because it so happened that the party, as it was being shown round the works, split up into four sections, and they were in the group which included me.

Only those who have been bored by being piloted through a factory, in which they have no interest, by an enthusiast to whom every aspect of the business has some especial beauty, will realize how wearisome that journey was.

Our guide was a young chemist attached to the laboratory.

"This is the office where the men are checked and sometimes searched— This is the weigh house where all the raw material is weighed on the cart outside— This is the men's luncheon room; you will see the kitchens— Here is the refinery—"

There was a tedious little delay because one of the ladies of the party wanted the weigh bridge explained. I know of nothing so annoying as the ignorance of other people on the subjects with which one is familiar, and I chafed whilst the courteous guide explained that the steel platform flush with the ground was the "bridge" on which the metal was weighed, and that the weighing apparatus itself was inside the little house out of sight.

We had several such waits, for the average scientist is very dense on elementary topics.

And so we meandered on until I found myself hard put to it to stop yawning.

At last, however, the tour of the purely mechanical side of the work was completed.

I thought Lady Knitborough looked unusually pale as we stood outside the door of the big strong-room wherein the ancient jewelry was stored and displayed.

"I'm afraid you have found this inspection rather fatiguing," I said.

She turned quickly with the air of one who had been startled by an unexpected sound.

"No—yes—I am rather," she said, a little breathlessly. "It was close in the refining-room."

She half turned away as though to end the conversation, and thinking she was ill, and adverse to talking, I said no more.

Annie was engaged in an animated conversation with Lord Knitborough, the burden of which, so far as I could hear from the scraps which came my way, related to India and sport. I was edging towards them when Sir Philip arrived with the keys and the party passed in, Annie and I being the last to enter.

I have referred to this room as a "strong-room." It was not that in the ordinary sense, being built of masonry, and filled with a large safe which was built into a solid column of stone in the center.

It was a fairly large room and round its sides a plain, broad wooden shelf had been erected. This had been covered with blue velvet and on this were spread the priceless trinkets which were the delight of the long dead beauties of the past age.

Annie took it all in with one glance.

"Curious, isn't it," he said under his breath, "a king's ransom, and not so much as a glass case— When English business people are careless, they jolly well *are* careless."

There was a perfect babble of talk as the members handled the wonderful jewels and voiced their admiration.

Sir Philip had here assumed the *cicerone*, and the larger group of visitors gathered round him as he explained the character of the various exhibits. He made a slow progress along the shelf, the interested members of the party following as slowly.

"This is, I think, the gem of the collection," said Sir Philip, and lifted a belt from the bench.

Looking over the shoulder of Annie, who was just in front of me, I saw the jewel.

It was a belt made up of plates of beaten gold carved in a barbaric design. The plates were square and in each corner blazed a big ruby, as large as a three-penny piece. In the center of each plate, four diamonds were mounted in a row.

"This," said Sir Philip, impressively, "is known to archæologists as the Queen of Sheba's Belt. As to whether it was ever the property of that Queen is very doubtful, but of its antiquity there can be no question."

I saw Lady Knitborough take the belt from his hand and look at it, and her husband reach impulsively to take it from her.

"It is very beautiful—and very heavy," she said in a low voice.

"It weighs nine pounds and three ounces," responded Sir Philip with a smile; "you will notice that the plates are very thick—its exact value, intrinsically, is twenty-five thousand pounds."

There was a little murmur of admiration, a confusion of talk as questions were plied and the belt was handed from one member to the other and finally replaced by Sir Philip on the shelf.

The party moved on from jewel to jewel until the whole collection had been carefully inspected. Some there were who went back to inspect at their leisure such of the exhibits as had excited their admiration—of these Lady Knitborough and her husband were a notable pair. Annie was frankly bored, and looked his relief when the strong-room door was finally passed and the three confidential workmen, who had charge of the treasures, entered to store the jewels in their cases.

"There's a lunch if you'd like to go to it," said Annie; "as for me, I am going to smoke."

I should have followed him but for the fact that Lord Knitborough at that moment beckoned me. I had had a brief talk with him in our tour of the build-

ing, in the course of which I discovered that we had mutual acquaintances.

"Come here, Mr. Staines," he called in his high, sharp voice. "I want to introduce you to my wife—eh, Aggie?"

If she had been pale before she was deathly now. I thought she was going to faint and she must have seen my alarm for she pulled herself together with an effort, and smiled.

"Do not be alarmed, Mr. Staines," she said, but it was only her lips that smiled—her eyes spoke of a hidden pain. "There is a very prosaic explanation for my pallor—I am hungry."

We went into the workmen's dining-room, where a luncheon had been laid. I was separated from the two by the official who had prepared the plan of the table, and found myself between a chattering lady who spoke all the time about dogs, and an elderly scientist who worked out a table of resistance for the benefit of an uncomprehending neighbor, with the aid of a pencil borrowed from a waiter and the back of a menu card.

"I don't see Sir Philip anywhere," said the lady on my left suddenly.

I looked up. The chairman's seat was vacant and I was wondering what had happened to our host when a waiter bent over me.

"Will you go outside, sir, and see your friend?"

I nodded, and with an apology to my fair neighbor made my way from the room.

I found Annie and Sir Philip in the directors' room, and I saw from the knight's face that there was something wrong. Annie closed the door behind me.

"You had better be in on this," he said shortly; "the Queen of Sheba's Belt has gone."

"Gone!"

My friend picked up something from the table.

"Why!" I cried in amazement, "there it is!"

He shook his head and smiled grimly.

"Looks like it, doesn't it?" he said, "but that's a fake—a tolerable imitation. This is what we found when the men

went to pack it away—it is the work of an amateur, made of brass and glass."

Sir Philip, the picture of tragic despair, sat huddled up in his chair.

"This is dreadful," he said, with a groan; "the belt is priceless, and it was loaned to us by M. de Joelenberg, of Paris."

"But how could the thief secure a copy?" I asked.

Annie took up the sham.

"Pretty easy, I should imagine," he said. "The belt has been photographed and the picture has been in half a dozen illustrated papers, hasn't it, Sir Philip?" The director nodded his head. "It was easy enough to copy," said Annie; "the design is simple. The densest amateur could have done it—I suppose there is no doubt whatever about your men?"

The knight shook his head.

"Terrible—terrible!" he said huskily. "This is the worst thing that could have happened—what can we do—for heaven's sake, Mr. Rensell, suggest something."

Annie sat down at the table, his head resting on his hand.

"We can't ask them to submit to a search—we can't even jostle them and search them that way, because they may be carrying something bulky."

He thought for another minute; then he got up.

"You go in to lunch," he said briskly; "take Staines with you; keep them at lunch as long as possible; make a speech or something—I want a man you can absolutely rely upon."

"Take Barton," said Sir Philip and rang the bell; "he's the manager here."

"He'll do." Annie was still thinking. "I want a carpet and a camera—we passed a photographer's not three minutes' walk from here."

Gower was undisguisedly bewildered.

"Do as you like, my dear chap," he said, "but what on earth—"

"Off you go to lunch," said Annie.

That luncheon I shall never forget; it seemed interminable. I had no appetite, yet I forced myself to eat for fear those near me would believe that something was wrong.



"This is what we found—the work of an amateur, made of brass and glass"

The worst case was poor Sir Philip Gower, whose duty it was to take an amiable and benign interest in the small affairs of his immediate neighbors.

He made the worst speech I have ever heard a human being make.

When he was not incoherent he was hopelessly commonplace, and his unfortunate audience groaned in the spirit as he labored on.

Suddenly he came to an abrupt end, and looking round for the cause I saw Annie standing in the doorway. He walked across the room to the chairman and bending down said something in a low voice.

Sir Philip nodded and rose.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he said, "I have arranged for a photographer to take a photograph of all who have honored us with their presence here to-day, and who will, I trust, honor us with their company to-morrow, when I hope to afford you an opportunity of witnessing the new gold welding process."

Then he sat down and the guests turned from one to the other with those smiles of self-depreciation peculiar to people who are about to sit for their portraits.

Outside, near the entrance gate, a big carpet had been spread and before this a photographer stood with a large camera. To the surprise of everybody, no group was attempted, but one by one the guests were posed by Annie herself, the photograph taken and the subject moved on to make room for another.

It was done very expeditiously.

"How very odd," said the lady of the dogs to me, as she went to take her place—and that is how it struck me.

But there was a subtle flattery in the individual photographing which appealed to most members of the party.

Lord Knitborough seemed immensely pleased with the idea and chuckled hugely as he took his position.

The ceremony took very little time—it was all over in ten minutes although twenty people had been photographed.

As the guests were moving to the gate of the factory, Annie gave me a nod and I followed to the directors' room. He

had a sheet of paper in his hand, and this he spread on the table.

"No. 1 was Professor Grill," he said, referring to the sheet. "No. 2 was Lady Madleigh, No. 3 was Dr. Galsmanworth, No. 4 is Lady Knitborough—"

He recited the list through—it included me, for I had faced the camera uninvited by him and to his evident amusement.

We were joined very shortly after by Sir Philip.

"Now, Rensell, what does it mean?" he said. "Why did you insist upon their coming back to-morrow? I had to invent a reason on the spur of the moment."

"Will they come?" asked Annie quickly.

"Oh, yes, they'll come—they have been interested—they may not all come back; does that make any difference?"

"Not much." Annie shook his head. "If there is one amongst them that is guilty, he or she will return."

"Why?"

"Put yourself in his place—conscious of guilt, would he be likely to make himself conspicuous by absence?"

"But what have you done?"

Annie smiled.

"You must trust me—and Barton," he said, and smiled at the grey-bearded manager who appeared at the moment.

I did not attempt to sound Annie that night when we returned to our flat. I recognized how delicate a matter it was in which he was engaged, and refrained from putting any question which might possibly be a source of embarrassment.

And yet, as may be imagined, I was pre-occupied with speculations as to the fate of the belt. Who, for instance, would have ventured the theft of so priceless a relic even had opportunity presented itself? To sell such a well-known treasure intact would be impossible; to remove and dispose of even the individual stones would be difficult, for gems such as they, were rare indeed. The thief must be an inexperienced criminal to risk so rash a theft—of that I was sure.

Even more perplexing, to my mind,

was the manner in which the exchange had been made. Sir Philip had been positive in his belief that his three confidential workmen were guiltless; and they had been equally positive that no one save the members of our party had entered the room. Who, among that dis-

He laughed again and seemed to enjoy the joke.

"I confess I do not understand why they were photographed," I said.

"Come inside," and he led the way back to the room.

He drew a chair up to the table and



One by one the guests were posed by Annie herself

tinguished company, could have taken the precious girdle?

To my surprise, after dinner when we were sitting on the balcony which overlooks Kilbrook Gardens, Annie opened the subject himself.

"You're wondering about Her Majesty of Sheba's Belt!" he said.

"I am," I confessed.

"And whether I know the culprit," he laughed softly. "Well, I don't."

taking a sheet of paper and a pencil he made a rough sketch of the works.

"Now do you see?" he asked.

I shook my head.

"It tells me nothing," I confessed and he stared.

"Well, well, well!" he said and his tone was indescribably offensive.

He pushed the plan away from him.

"How rum," he said, speaking half to himself, "that a man gifted—"

He shook his head mournfully.

"There is only one explanation," I said irritably, "and that is that you have discovered a method of taking X-Ray snapshots."

I did not complete my sentence, for he burst into a fit of laughter.

"You'll be the death of me," he said, wiping his eyes.

Early the following morning Sir Philip Gower called for us. He had the appearance of a man who had spent a bad night and his first words confirmed this view.

"I haven't had a wink of sleep," he said, declining Annie's invitation to breakfast with a gesture of disgust, "and I don't want to eat. Candidly, Rensell, will you be able to get that belt back?"

"If one of your Guild of Science took it—I shall," said Annie comfortably.

"Did the photographs tell you anything?"

"Photographs? Oh, Lord, yes! I'd forgotten all about them. No, I haven't seen the photographs!"

Sir Philip rose agitatedly and paced the room.

"I wish I understood this confounded mystery of yours," he said, and I think his annoyance was pardonable.

We went down to Lewisham again and arrived an hour before the visitors. There were only two absentees. One was the aged scientist who had drawn diagrams on the back of his menu card and the other was a lady who was some relative of Sir Philip's and had been what he described the previous day as a "courtesy scientist."

The day's program was very much the same as the previous day, except that we confined our interest to a purely technical lecture on gold-tempering and witnessed experiments which may have been highly instructive but which left me unmoved and uninformed.

Lord and Lady Knitborough had been two of the first arrivals.

I decided that the pallor I had noticed before must be constitutional. She looked ill and worn and there was that touch of sharpness in the face that fatigue and worry bring to the roundest of

cheeks. Annie did not come to the lunch, which seemed to me, in my overwrought state, to be almost as interminable as the lunch of yesterday.

Sir Philip did not make a speech, but at the end of the meal he rose and offered his guests an apology. The photographs of the previous day had been spoilt by a defect in the lens. Might he ask them if they would again honor him *et cetera, et cetera*.

It was neat and humble and glib, and I recognized in its terminology the strong right-hand of Annie. Again we trooped out into the yard, again one by one we stood upon the blue carpet and heard the click of the camera—

It was time to go. Sir Philip, his face frozen to a smile, was shaking hands with the members of the Guild.

Lord and Lady Knitborough were walking towards the gate when Annie came towards them.

"Lady Knitborough," he said, and she stopped dead and faced him, and I saw her face was drawn and haggard. "Could you spare me a minute," said Annie, and she walked with him into the directors' room.

He jerked his head for me to follow.

"My friend had better be a witness to what I have to say," he said, and pulled a chair towards her.

She sat down, her lip trembling but her eyes fixed on him.

"You have the Queen of Sheba's Belt," he said quietly; "it was stolen by your husband, and you brought it here hoping to replace it without anybody being the wiser."

She nodded and stood up. She was wearing the long coat she had worn the day before. The days were cold in April.

She opened the coat.

About her waist sparkled the belt.

With shaking hands she unfastened it and handed it to Annie, who laid it on the table.

"Your husband is not quite—well?" said Annie gently.

She nodded again.

"All crime is madness," my friend went on, "and sometimes insanity finds

expression in the planning of crime—I am very sorry.”

He held out his hand, and she took it.

“He had forgotten all about it this morning,” she said in a low voice. “It is only sometimes—he—he—is like this.”

“I understand,” said Annie gently, and opened the door for her.

She hesitated.

“If—if Sir Philip must be told—tell him it was I who took them—tell him I had bills—”

She nearly broke down.

“Don’t worry,” said Annie, and smiled. He had the sweetest smile of anyone I have ever known.

“How”—she hesitated and then tremulously finished the query—“did you know?”

“Well,” said Annie quietly, “in the first place, there was your note, you know.”

“You knew I wrote that?”

“I know it now, at any rate,” Annie returned evasively. “And I can appreciate your reasons for sending it. Perhaps, after all, it was of great help. As for the rest—well, why trouble, Lady Knitborough? Believe me, it was nothing anyone else would have noticed.”

She bowed her head in acquiescence. “Perhaps you are right,” she said. “I can only thank you—and pray that the future may bring nothing worse.”

Faltering, she turned away; Annie followed and walked with her to the gate, chatting on the first subject that came into his mind. His lordship was waiting, cheerful, jocular—you could hear his high laugh above all the others.

“Thought you were never coming,” he said boisterously. “Good-by, Gower;

had a most instructive day. Will send you a little pamphlet on scarabs—wrote it years ago.”

I watched them drive off, then turned and joined Annie and Sir Philip.

We went back to the office.

“Here’s your belt,” said Annie, when the door was closed, and the managing director nearly fainted.

“No, I will offer no explanation,” said Annie, “nor will I tell you from whom I recovered it.”

“Perhaps you are right,” said Sir Philip, and there the matter ended so far as he was concerned.

“For heaven’s sake, tell me,” I asked Annie when we were on our way home, “how you discovered that Lord Knitborough had taken the belt—and more wonderful still, how you knew that his wife had brought it back.”

“Simple,” said Annie. “Didn’t you understand the dodge of the camera and the carpet?”

“No,” I confessed.

“The camera,” said Annie with that smiling face, “was a scheme to make them stand in one place—there on the carpet—”

“Yes,” I said as he paused.

“The carpet hid the weigh bridge—My boy, Barton and I weighed every one of ’em!”

“But—”

“Don’t you see, Barton inside the house, took their weight yesterday and again to-day. Lord Knitborough was exactly nine pounds lighter to-day than he was on the previous day—and Lady Knitborough nine pounds heavier. Nine pounds is the weight of the belt. Simple, isn’t it?”



The main and only street worth mentioning in Hillsboro

Perkins of Hillsboro

BY RANDOLPH BARTLETT

ILLUSTRATED BY R. M. BRINKERHOFF

WHEN Samuel Lincoln Perkins returned from college and hung out his shingle as attorney-at-law over the window of a semi-furnished room above Old Man Jones' general store on the main and only street worth mentioning in Hillsboro, the *Weekly Argus* of Centerville, ten miles away, had this to say:

That somnolent sarcophagus of the living dead who haven't even enough initiative to die—our neighboring village of Hillsboro—has a brand new lawyer, with a brand new college education and a brand new sign. We are sorry for the misguided young man, Mr. Samuel Lincoln Perkins, who is well known in these parts, as he comes of a good family. We congratulate Hillsboro, however, as, with a lawyer to stir up trouble, its citizens may develop some activities of a more metropolitan character than the daily horse-shoe throwing, or the nightly checker game in the corner grocery.

This gives in succinct form a fairly comprehensive idea of the social and commercial activities of Hillsboro, at the time of the arrival of Sam Perkins, lawyer. Nobody ever had been able to delve far enough into the past to discover the original cause of Hillsboro. It was just one of those communities which

appear to be founded on the general principle that there should be a town every so many miles, for social reasons, and to aid in the distribution of mail.

As for Samuel Lincoln Perkins, the "good family" referred to now consisted of an aged but very competent mother, who, with the aid of Abner White, a natural born hired man and a veteran in the Perkins service, managed to make a frugal living out of a small farm, the residue of a once broad estate, most of which had been sacrificed to Mrs. Perkins' determination that Samuel Lincoln should have all the education that money could buy for him. Neighbors, in that kind and thoughtful way neighbors have, made generous expenditures of pity upon Mrs. Perkins, but only among themselves, for the smiling and optimistic mother of the embryonic lawyer was not the sort of person who invites pity, directly expressed. Also, be it recorded to the credit of Samuel himself, as soon as he was old enough to realize the sacrifices that were being made for him, he openly objected; his mother had made up her mind, however, and she made it so plain that not merely Sam's future but her own happiness, was so com-

pletely involved in the success of her plans, that the youth tackled his books so much the harder, deciding that the least he could do was to get the largest possible returns for the money being invested in him.

About the only person in Hillsboro who ever expressed openly his low opinion of the Perkins plans was Old Man Jones. It is an important distinction that Jones was not an old man—he was just Old Man Jones. He was only a little over fifty, but his shaggy white hair, his aggressive, round, white beard, and his keen, shrewd eyes bespoke for him the possession of all that wisdom which makes for worldly success in Hillsboro or New York, in Paris, Illinois, or Paris, France. He was "Old Man" Jones alike to the school-boy and the octogenarian. The title was a tribute to his wisdom and success—not a physical description. He owned the principal store of Hillsboro; he was the postmaster; he owned several farms which were worked under his direct supervision, and he held mortgages on about all the farms in the vicinity that were mortgaged. He was not grasping, in the sinister sense of the word, but he had a well developed bump of acquisitiveness. He never foreclosed a mortgage until the debtor acknowledged there was no other course. Withal, he was a pretty fine sort of citizen, but if his judgment were questioned he was always filled with rage or contempt, according as his opponent proved right or wrong.

So when the Widow Perkins deliberately flew in the face of Providence by ignoring his advice regarding the up-bringing of Samuel Lincoln, Old Man Jones' contempt for the proceeding was epochal. He had appropriate texts for expressions of his disapproval from time to time, as he was always in the market for good real estate, and it was to him Mrs. Perkins went when she felt the need of more funds for the lawyerization of Sam, and was forced to sell another field from her farm.

"What does Hillsboro want of a lawyer?" snorted Old Man Jones. "About the only job that there's been for a law-

yer here, as far back as I can remember, is this one of makin' out deeds an' I guess we don't need no lawyers to do that for us. Now there's Hez Jackson, 'cross the street, can't get help for his blacksmith shop, to be depended on, for love or money, an' only yesterday he says to me, if he could git a young man that would be stiddy he'd give him a share in the business. Sam's a big, strap-pin' boy, and there's a fine chance for him to settle down in a good, reliable trade."

Mrs. Perkins only smiled.

"It aint that I'm proud," she said, "or that I think Sam's too good for the farm or a trade, but somehow I just made up my mind that as hard as we old folks have worked all our lives, we've got mighty little to show for it. So Sam's going to be a lawyer, and if there aint room for him in Hillsboro, Hillsboro aint the only place on earth."

This was at the beginning of Sam's second term in college, and before he had finished his course Jones had bought the greater part of the Perkins place, and accompanied the purchases with declarations that he "never saw such plumb foolishness." He seemed to get quite worked up about it as time went on, this being the most notorious case of anyone ignoring his advice, and he seemed to take it as a personal affront. Even at his own fireside he expatiated upon the absurdity of Sam Perkins being a lawyer, until one day his daughter Sally remarked:

"Gracious, pa, can't you let Sam Perkins be a lawyer if he wants to? I don't see that it's any of our business, and besides, according to the newspapers, lawyers make lots of money. Anyhow, I don't blame anyone for wanting to be different from the dead-and-alive folks around Hillsboro."

Jones occasionally suspected his daughter of having a mind of her own, an altogether unprecedented and inexplicable state of affairs with a young woman not yet twenty, especially as her mother never had displayed any such symptoms.

"Oh, you don't, eh?" snapped her



"So you're a regular lawyer now," sneered the dictator of Hillsboro

father. "Well, let me tell you one thing"—and the keen old man went right to the crux of the matter without any hesitation or beating about the bush—"if I catch Sam Perkins doin' any sparkin' around Sally Jones, I'll have a few words to say on the subject—that's all."

What sequence this remark found in what Sally had said, is difficult to explain, as there had been no previous sparking attempts upon which to predicate such a warning. So it must be set down to the prophetic instinct of parents, and dismissed, as Sally dismissed it, with a gasping:

"Why, pa!"

So it transpired that Samuel Lincoln Perkins and his smiling mother marched, countermarched, deployed and otherwise trampled upon, over and around the wisdom of Old Man Jones, and in due course young Perkins arrived from college with a document which notified

all persons that he was properly qualified to attend to any and all legal business they might require to have transacted. The day after his arrival he called at the store.

"So you're a regular lawyer now," sneered the dictator of Hillsboro. "Well, trot out your samples. Let's see what you've got for sale."

"That's not professional etiquette," said Sam. "The difference between a commercial traveler and a lawyer is that one brings you troubles, and you take your troubles to the other."

"Then I reckon you don't expect to open shop here in Hillsboro," rejoined Old Man Jones. "Nobody here has any troubles—leastways no one that has enough money for them to make it worth while for a lawyer to straighten 'em out."

"You never can tell till you try," Sam smiled. "How do you know but there are

dozens of incipient law suits boiling away under the placid calm of Hillsboro's quiet life, just waiting for a convenient opportunity to spurt up? How do you know but there are dozens of persons in this vicinity enduring injustice that they would have had rectified years ago if they had had an expert adviser handy?"

"Oh shucks!" was all Jones had to say, and he said it in the tone of a man who has no time to waste upon frivolous conversation.

Specifically, Sam's business with Old Man Jones that morning was the leasing of a vacant room over the store. The two spent a pleasant and mutually enjoyable hour haggling over terms. They finally compromised, Sam taking a lease for a year, paying a month's rent in advance; next day he moved in his furniture, consisting of a long shelf of books, a table, four kitchen chairs and a diminutive typewriter. Then he ordered a neat little black and gold sign from the wagon-maker across the street and became subject for the previously quoted item in the *Centerville Weekly Argus*.

Hillsboro's preconceived idea of a young lawyer was a man who sat patiently in his office day after day, waiting hungrily for people to come and tell him their troubles. Consequently the doings of Samuel Lincoln Perkins in the next few weeks, bothered them considerably, and furnished much food for gossip. Every morning he would go to Jones' store, in the rear of which the post office was secreted, and ask if there were any mail for him.

This custom of waiting until morning to ask for his mail, when everyone knew that the mail had come by the five o'clock stage in the afternoon ever since there had been any mail, was very annoying to Hillsboro. It was a flagrant violation of all known rules, regulations and customs regulating mail. The mere fact that Sam never got any letters, and probably did not expect any, was not germane. Any person who proposed to ask for mail should ask for it between five and six o'clock in the afternoon, and failing to do so should wait until the

corresponding hour the following day. This law, applying to the generality of people, who had no special incentive to methodical habits, should, Hillsboro felt, apply even more strictly to a man who aspired to the respect and confidence of the community at large. To ignore it habitually and openly amounted almost to a violation of the postal laws.

Strangely enough, no one hinted that this aberration might be due to the fact that at the regular mail time Old Man Jones was in charge of the post office, while in the morning Miss Sally was usually alone in the store, as there was scarcely any business in either department, and her father was out attending to his farming interests. I say "strangely enough," because in communities like Hillsboro gossip almost invariably is unreliable, and I give you my word—as the only person who can possibly know anything about the affair—that at this time Sally Jones was to Sam Perkins only "the young woman in the store."

After his regular morning call, finding that there was no mail for him, Hillsboro's legal luminary would go up to his office, perhaps write a letter on his typewriter, tack a notice on his door, "Back at 2 p. m." and go for long rides into the country, and sometimes deep into the hills behind the town. Returning to the office at the hour specified on the notice, Sam would remain perhaps half an hour, tack up a new sign, "Back at 9 a. m. Tuesday," or whatever the next day might be, and go off on more excursions.

This was too much. Residents of Hillsboro who never had the remotest expectation of doing business with the young lawyer, took his long rides during business hours as a natural grievance. They would stop in the middle of their forenoon's work to go to the office, knock ostentatiously on the door, discover the sign and read it as avidly as if they had not known all along that it was there, and what it said. Then they would go away feeling that Sam Perkins had been trespassing on their time. What sort of an excuse for the call any of them would



Old Man Jones

have made if Sam had happened by accident to be in his office, is difficult to guess.

Old Man Jones grew almost violent over the situation, and frequently held forth at great length while distributing the mail.

"Ye all know that I was ag'in' this law business from the start," he said, and Hillsboro nodded. "But nobody ever heard me say a word ag'in' the boy. I allus thought he was industrious and reliable, though holdin' that his mother was makin' a mistake sendin' him to college. But now he is a lawyer, what does he do? Does he attend to his law business? No siree! He goes gallopin' all over the country, havin' a nice, easy time, while his poor old mother an' Abner White earns his bread and butter for him on the bit of a place they've got left. If he aint got any law business to 'tend to, why don't he take off his fine

clothes an' help around the farm?"

Hillsboro nodded and "Why indeeded" all over the place.

At this stage in the career of Samuel Lincoln Perkins it is doubtful if any of his fellow-townsmen would have entrusted him with the drawing out of a chattel mortgage. At the outset they were willing to take him at his own valuation and await developments, but his unmethodical habits and manifest laziness antagonized them all. Even Sally felt some sort of a disappointment, which developed into chagrin when her father recalled her previous defense of the profession.

"Well—now what d'ye think of lawyers, since you've got a chance to study 'em close to?" he asked her one day.

"Oh pa!" was all Sally replied, and she said it in a way that satisfied her father that she had no desire to discuss Sam in any of his various phases.

II

Hillsboro was located on a sort of apron, spreading away from a range of what Sam called "alias mountains." Behind it were the unproductive, uninhabited hills—in front a broad, fertile plain. Beyond the ten-mile stretch of hills lay Centerville, and a similar broad plain, through which ran a railroad. A branch line ran up to Centerville and stopped. This was a part of the great Hilliman system. Hillsboro was isolated. The farmers of the district had to haul their produce to a siding of the P. & P. N., twenty miles away, but even this twenty miles was shorter, practically speaking, than the ten miles across the hills to Centerville. From time to time Hillsboro had begged for a branch line of the P. & P. N., but the railway, knowing the farmers had to use their line anyway, had always refused. So Hillsboro remained unprogressive, while Centerville had a weekly newspaper.

Samuel Perkins, lawyer, mused upon these things as he rode around the country, undermining all possible chances of being regarded by Hillsboro as a sane human being. Suddenly he changed his habits. One morning, after inquiring as usual for mail from Miss Sally, he inquired where he could find her father.

Sally didn't just know, but supposed he would be in for dinner about noon.

"Tell him to come up to my office when he comes in," said Sam. "I have some business to talk over with him."

Sally gasped.

Send her father to see Sam Perkins? The very idea! If Sam Perkins wanted to see her father, the thing for him to do was to go where her father was. That was the Hillsboro mode of thought, and Sally had come to accept it by induction. Before she could voice it, however, Sam was gone, flinging back through the door:

"Now please don't forget. It's important."

When Old Man Jones returned a few hours later and received the message, he was furious and nearly speechless.

"The cheeky young good-for-nothing!" he shouted. "He said I was to go and see him, eh! Well, he'll wait a long while. Of all the— Said it was important too! Well, let him come and see me if it's important! Think I've got nothin' to do but go chasing around tryin' to find ne'er-do-well young upstarts?"

In this tenor he growled his way through his midday meal, all the while speculating as to what Sam could want. He wondered if the Perkins family was cut of money again and wanted to sell some more of the farm. As the property belonged to Mrs. Perkins, however, the natural thing would have been for her to come and see him as she had always done in the past. The only other reason he could think of was that Sam had decided he wanted to give up the office. To Old Man Jones' certain knowledge, not a single bit of business had gone to Sam since the office was opened. Ordinarily Jones would have been willing to forego the insignificant rent money, if his tenant was in difficulty, but the Perkins family had been so cock-sure and independent that he would show them they could not flaunt his advice and then come to him for help. With this in his mind as the only possible thing Sam could want to see him about, Jones fidgeted around the store a while and then blurted out:

"Guess I'll just go up and give that young feller a piece of my mind."

And he stamped his way upstairs, and flung himself into Sam's office.

"No, I won't let you out of your lease," he almost shouted. "You took this office for a year and you've got to keep it for a year. Doc Simpson, the dentist that comes every month, wanted it, an' I told him it was rented, so he got a room over at Missus Simpson's boarding house and if you s'pose—"

"One moment, please, Mr. Jones," Sam called out. "Nobody's asking you to cancel the lease. In fact, I may need another room soon for a private office. I was wondering just this morning if we could knock out that partition—but then we will discuss that when we come to it."



"Tell him to come up to my office when he comes in," said Sam

"Then what in Sam Hill did you want to see me about?" asked Jones.

"I just wanted to know if you happen to be able to tell me who owns that land in the V of the hills in back of Forden's place."

"Meanin' the dry strip beyond the town-line?"

"That's it."

Old Man Jones knew who owned it, and he suspected that Sam knew. He owned it himself. It was rocky and very sandy, and water drained off it both ways, into a scoop in the hills, and out into the open plain. It was absolutely worthless for any known purpose to which land is usually put.

"What about it?" asked Jones. "They aint any lawsuit comin' up over it, is they?"

"Not at all. I just wanted to find out who owns it."

"Well then, I do. What about it?"

"How much do you want for it?"

"Who wants to buy it?"

"What has that got to do with it?"

"What's it good for?"

"Don't you know yourself?"

"Found oil on it?"

"No."

"Now look here, Mr. Lawyer," said Old Man Jones, laying his cards face up on the table. "I aint been on this earth more'n fifty years with my eyes shut. I've found that when anyone wants to buy land it's because he expects to make money on it. I can't see how on earth anybody's goin' to make money out of that barren lot, but that don't mean that it can't be done. So until I

find out what it's worth to the purchaser I guess I'll just keep hold of it myself."

"Now we are getting down to business," said Sam. "I will be quite frank with you. As you may know, I have been passing the last few weeks in riding around the district, trying to figure out what our greatest need is, here in Hillsboro. The law business being rather quiet"—Old Man Jones grinned, but Sam paid no attention—"I thought I would embark upon some side enterprise for a time. The only thing I could find in which we are lacking is a suitable cemetery."

Old Man Jones stared a second, and then laughed a short, barking laugh.

"I am quite serious, Mr. Jones," Sam continued. "The only cemetery we have is down behind the church, where it is flooded in spring and frozen harder than rock in winter. It is a disgrace to the community—a blot upon the neighborhood. The lot I am speaking about is high and dry, an ideal location. No wonder Hillsboro doesn't grow; no wonder we are behind the times. Who ever heard of a progressive town with a cemetery like ours? Not until Hillsboro has a cemetery worthy of its civic destiny—a cemetery to which its citizens can point with pride—a cemetery which will be at once a dignified resting-place for those who have gone before, and a symbol that those who remain are very much alive—not until then, I say, will Hillsboro take that place among the cities of this state to which she is entitled by reason of the fertility of her tributary plains, the vigor of her manhood, and the inspired endeavor of her traditions."

Old Man Jones looked at Sam from between narrowed lids. He wasn't quite sure whether the youth was trying to poke fun at him and Hillsboro, or whether Sam had simply gone crazy. He thought he knew a way to find out.

"Sam," he said finally, "I aint a religious man, an' yet I aint generally known as a swearin' man. But all I got to say is just this: Sam Perkins, ye're a damn fool."

"Very well," replied Sam calmly. "That little detail being amicably settled to the satisfaction of both parties, we can pass on to a discussion of the price of the property in question. As you have made it clear that you propose to retain an interest in any enterprise built up on the property, what interest will you sell? Make your proposition."

"Sam, they aint any use in lyin' to me. Give it to me straight. What're you goin' to do with that property?"

"I give you my word of honor, Mr. Jones, I am going to start a cemetery, if I can get the land at a reasonable price."

Jones still doubted.

"If you only want that lot for a cemetery, I'll give it to you for an old hat and the back taxes, which, I believe, total up to about eighty-seven cents."

"Sold!" exclaimed Sam. "I'll draw up the deed this afternoon, and insert a clause providing that if I do not establish a cemetery on the property within six months, it reverts to you free of incumbrance."

Old Man Jones was taken somewhat aback. He did not expect his proposition to be accepted with such alacrity, and was still suspicious. He grumbled and growled. Sam twitted him upon going back on his word.

"Oh well, shucks," he said impatiently, at last. "I was goin' to let the county sell it for taxes anyhow."

So the deal was closed and the next day Sam brought down to the store a battered old straw hat and handed it to Jones as full payment for the cemetery lot. The old man was determined to get something out of the deal if it was only satisfaction, so he hung the hat up over the post office partition, with this label:

SAM PERKINS GAVE ME THIS
HAT FOR THE BARREN LOT
BACK OF FORDEN'S PLACE. I
DON'T HAVE TO PAY TAXES
ON THE HAT. I WIN.

This completed Sam Perkins' professional suicide in Hillsboro, a fact which, while he was well aware of it, did not seem to worry him in the least. The significant silence which fell upon

the knots of people in the store and on the street as he approached, could have but one meaning. He smiled, both outwardly and inwardly, and went on his way. It was for Mrs. Perkins that the town felt most sympathy, but only once was any outward remark made to her.

"Seems to me, Mis' Perkins," said Hez Jackson, one day in Jones' store, "you made a mistake when you said your boy was studyin' to be a lawyer. Looks more like he's been apprenticed to a sexton."

"And it seems to me, Hez Jackson," replied Mrs. Perkins with asperity, "that some people put in so much time 'tending to other people's affairs that they might as well apply for space in my boy's cemetery now as later on, for all the good they are."

Hillsboro repeated this conversation with full appreciation of its humor, but without any change in its attitude toward the object.

Meanwhile, aided by Abner White, who shared Mrs. Perkins' estimate of and faith in Sam, the young lawyer leveled off the five-acre lot in the V of the hills, built a neat fence around it, painted the fence white, nailed up a sign "Highview Cemetery," placed an advertisement in the *Centerville Weekly*



"Stop, pa! I wont listen to another word!"

Argus, and wrote a formal letter to Old Man Jones, notifying him that the contract of purchase was complete, as the cemetery was finished and open for business. The next day Sam was given quite a shock by receiving the following letter:

Samuel Lincoln Perkins, Esq.,

Dear Sir: Am in receipt of your favor of the 10th inst. and in reply would say a cemetery aint a cemetery

until folks is buried in it. Trusting
you are the same, I remain,
Yours truly,
Jasper Jeremiah Jones.

This was an unanticipated turn in affairs. Inwardly Sam thanked Old Man Jones for drawing his attention to a technicality which he himself had overlooked. He stood at the window of his office with the letter in his hand and stared out over Hillsboro, and for the first time since he had opened the office his face bore a troubled look. He could see the white palings of the cemetery from where he stood. He was reminded of the song in the comic opera about the man with an elephant on his hands, and unconsciously he began to hum the chorus:

The elephant ate all night,
The elephant ate all day—

He stopped and gave a laugh and said aloud, "Thank goodness my elephant doesn't eat, anyhow," and this seemed to make him feel better. Then he looked the situation squarely in the face.

The new difficulty might prove a serious obstacle in delaying his plans, and if this delay continued over six months the property would revert to Jones. He would then have to re-purchase it, and probably on more expensive terms.

And it is an entirely different matter, securing business for a cemetery, from any other enterprise in existence. You can hardly go up to a man and ask him if he will give you his burial trade. A cemetery lot is something that no one buys until some one else needs it, and Hillsboro was disgustingly healthy. Looking over the situation with a full appreciation of all its technical possibilities, Sam decided that lacking an actual interment, he could make the cemetery just as official if he sold some plots. But where could he find a buyer? He could not expect help in this direction from the general run of Hillsboro residents, so he decided to canvass a few of the other outcasts, in whose opinions he probably would be considerably exalted

by reason of the sympathetic bond between them. The first one he selected was Peter Higgins, the shoemaker, who was so surly that nobody ever even told him any gossip, which, in Hillsboro, was the last word in ostracism. He also made mental notes of an itinerant tinsmith who was addicted to drink, and a clock mender who had served a term in the penitentiary. By accepting payment for the lots in trade he succeeded, after long and tedious arguments as to the uncertainty of human life, and the duty every man owed to himself to see he had a decent burial place provided, in selling each one of them a piece of his cemetery.

If the three purchasers had compared their deeds they would have found that Sam had sold them lots off in one corner. Possibly he was reserving the choice locations for cash customers—possibly he had other reasons. However, the trio did not compare their deeds—not for several weeks.

III

If the habits of Samuel Lincoln Perkins, attorney at law, had been the same the first weeks after opening his office in Hillsboro as they were in the period following the establishment of his cemetery on an official basis, his fellow-townsmen would have regarded him merely as misguided in his choice of occupations, and not, as they now did, as a hopeless imbecile.

True, he still called for his mail in the morning, but even this effrontery might have been overlooked in time, in view of his other lawyer-like activities. From morning until night he could be heard clicking away on his typewriter. For days he did nothing but write letters, and all to persons away from Hillsboro, so they could not have been on cemetery business. In fact Sam now proceeded to neglect shamefully the cemetery for which he had sacrificed his professional standing.

Old Man Jones held his position as postmaster in too high regard to divulge its secrets, but he noted privately and



"Well, I'll be gosh darned if I thought of that!" Jones capitulated

with growing wonder, the names of the men and companies with which Sam began corresponding. The famous financiers of the Hilliman lines, who had always been mere names and pictures in the city papers, almost mythical creatures, in fact, were receiving and, from the outward appearance of the incoming mails, actually answering letters from Sam Perkins. If it had been merely the officials of the comparatively insignificant P. & P. N., Old Man Jones could have passed them over with no curiosity whatever, but how Sam Perkins could have any business with the Hilliman giants of commerce, was a direct challenge to his perspicacity.

As Sally shared her father's duties in the post office, she naturally shared the secrets, and she began to feel that, after all, Sam might justify the general opinion she had held of lawyers. She and her father never discussed the subject again, but one morning when Sam called for his mail and got an unusually large number of letters, she remarked:

"Business seems to be looking up, Mr. Perkins."

"Yes, it is looking up, Miss Jones—looking away up—and I hope it will soon get where it is looking."

"Where is that?"

"Hillsboro."

"I don't understand."

"That's a little more charitable than the usual Hillsboro view, isn't it?"

"How do you mean?"

"Instead of saying, 'I don't understand,' they generally say 'Sam Perkins's crazy,' don't they?"

"I never said you were crazy."

"Really? Why not?"

"Oh, I don't know—unless—yes, I guess it's because there are so many things in this world I don't understand that one more didn't seem to make any difference to speak of."

Sam had been looking casually through his mail and carrying on his end of the conversation in a very absent sort of way, but Sally's tone, as she said this, made him look up.

"That's a pretty big piece of philosophy, Miss Jones," he said. "I never heard it put just that way before; and after-all, that is the whole essence of the injunction, 'Judge not that ye be not judged,' isn't it?"

"I don't know anything about philosophy, but I do know that Hillsboro makes me sick—so sick sometimes, that I want to run away. I know it's wrong, because pa is good to me and I have 'most everything I want, but isn't this an awful slow hole though? I don't see how you can stand it after having been away."

"You did go to Centerville to high school, didn't you?"

"Just one year. Then pa decided he needed me to help in the store."

"Would you like to borrow some of my books? I like to lend them to people who appreciate them. It might help some."

Just then Old Man Jones entered the store, and Sally suddenly recalled his old-time warning about "sparkin'," and while lending books could not exactly be classed as a sentimental overture, Sally decided not to risk her father's caustic tongue. So she turned away and became confusedly busy, remarking:

"Oh dear, I haven't any time to read."

Sam noticed that she was blushing, and seemingly embarrassed, so he left the window.

"Sold any more lots in the cemetery?" sneered Jones as Sam went out.

"No, but I have a fine prospect," Sam answered cheerfully.

"Expectin' to sell one to Pierpont Asterfeler, I reckon."

"Perhaps you are nearer right than you think."

The next morning Sam handed a small bundle to Sally.

"Here are a few of those books I spoke of yesterday," he said. "Take your time reading them. I'm going away to New York on business for a week or so."

Old Man Jones was out, so Sally beamed her thanks. It occurred to Sam

that she would be really fine looking if she could shake off that oppressed appearance.

He did not seem to consider it necessary to enlighten the remainder of Hillsboro as to his movements, and the little typewritten sign left on his office door, "Out of town—will return in a week," was regarded as simply another open insult. Nobody ever went anywhere without telling people, that is, unless they were ashamed to tell. Sally did not consider it her place to satisfy public curiosity. She felt a secret joy in the fact that she alone had been Sam's confidante, and was inexplicably elated when she remembered that he had said he was going "on business." She herself wondered a little at this feeling, and at last decided it was due simply to the fact that her father had been so caustic when she had defended the legal profession. This trip seemed, in a measure, to justify her stand. She hoped Sam would make a big success, not for any personal interest she felt in him—not at all: simply to show her father that she could be right herself, now and then, as well as he.

Her secretiveness regarding her knowledge of Sam's movements resulted in a storm a few days later, when her father, seeing her reading one of Sam's books, asked where she got it.

"Mr. Perkins lent it to me the morning he left for New York," she replied unguardedly, being engrossed in the book.

"Oh, he did, did he?" her father flared out. "Must be gettin' pretty friendly, to lend you books, and tell you where he's goin' when he didn't tell another soul in town. Now you listen here—I said I wasn't goin' to have no starvin' lawyer sparkin' around here, an' I aint, an' when he comes back—"

Sally banged the book down on the table, and faced her father with blazing eyes.

"Stop, pa! I wont listen to another word. There hasn't been any 'sparkin'' as you call it, and there isn't likely to be any. What do you suppose there is about an ignorant country bumpkin like

me to attract a man that has been through a university and seen life? He just took pity on me, cooped up here forever, and lent me some books. If I'd had half a chance it might have been different."

The last sentence was rather misty. Sally didn't say what might have been different, but this was no time to ask questions, as there were tears in sight, and her father walked speechless out of the house to think the whole affair over. He loved this only child of his deeply, and this was the first time she had ever indicated in the slightest degree that she was not perfectly contented. It did not occur to him that Sally might have been choking down some deep aspiration within her, all these years. It was what she had been born to, and what she naturally would expect. Old Man Jones made no allowance for the unrest of the younger generation. This rebellious spirit, this discontent, must be the work of some one, and the only some one possible was Sam Perkins. To the shrewd old brain, this was as clear as spring water, and he now felt for the young lawyer a hatred so bitter that it made him shudder. Old Man Jones had, in his life, despised weak men, and had been enraged at strong men who opposed him, but he never had felt called upon to hate, and now he did it with all the intensity of his vigorous soul.

So long as Mrs. Perkins had only disregarded his advice to set Sam at work at some useful trade, he had felt nothing but pity. So long as Sam had shown his unfitness for business by pottering around this cemetery affair, he had felt nothing but contempt. But now this good for nothing youth had come into his home and disturbed the peace of mind of his daughter, making her discontented with the life which she had to look forward to, and even putting on airs and making her feel he was better than she—this was no matter for contempt. Old Man Jones longed for the return of Sam with the same deep longing the tiger feels as it crouches by the spring where deer come to drink, and with about the same friendly intentions.

When Sam did return, he was accompanied by a quiet little man, whose every movement betokened tremendous energy, and whose eyes were never still, excepting when he was speaking; then they looked clear through the person to whom he spoke. As he and the lawyer climbed down from the stage, the stranger looked up and down the street, and seemed to be taking a mental inventory of Hillsboro and its inhabitants and environs. Hillsboro reciprocated, but with little satisfaction. There was not much opportunity to study the stranger, as Abner White whisked him and Sam away toward the Perkins farm immediately. Old Man Jones stood by in impotent rage. There had been no opportunity for him to speak his mind.

The next morning the two most talked-of persons in Hillsboro rode down to Sam's office, and the latter called for his mail as usual. The young lawyer was surprised at the little chill of disappointment that ran over him when he found Old Man Jones dealing out the mail instead of Sally. There were several others in the store, however, and again the angry father had to repress his hatred.

"I think I've got a buyer for a cemetery lot," Sam remarked smilingly, but the postmaster only growled through the window, like a bear in a cage.

A few minutes later Sam and his guest started out on horseback and Old Man Jones saw them ride up to the cemetery and on into the cleft in the hills behind it. All the room there was left in him by his consuming passion was filled with curiosity. The two were gone all that day, and the next they spent in driving around the farming country. By the third day curiosity was fighting in Jones for more room, and the danger of an internal explosion was narrowly averted. When Sam came for his mail he asked the veteran dictator of Hillsboro to go up to his office with him, and the old man, seeing the opportunity to speak his mind, and possibly satisfy his curiosity at the same time, complied. He was disarmed, however, before he could make his first thrust.

"Mr. Jones," said Sam, as they entered the office, and found the stranger waiting for them, "I want you to meet Mr. Warren, general manager of the Western Lines of the Hilliman system. Mr. Jones," he continued, turning to Warren, "is our leading merchant, postmaster and one of the largest land owners of the district."

Old Man Jones held out a palsied hand, weak with surprise. His rage was forgotten for the moment in the surprise. Here Sam Perkins had been entertaining the general manager of the Hilliman lines three days, and hadn't said a word to anyone about it! It was beyond belief.

"Glad to know you, Mr. Jones. Your young friend here has been showing me how we have been overlooking a fine lot of business. He has pointed out a natural route for a railway through the hills from Centerville, and I think I am safe in saying that when I lay the facts before the board of directors, or rather confirm the statements Mr. Perkins has made already, they will agree to build the road at once."

A railway to Hillsboro! It was too visionary. It had been tried time and again by Old Man Jones and the wealthiest farmers of the vicinity, and they had always been turned down by the P. & P. N. The idea of this young loafer of a lawyer getting a line clear through from Centerville was preposterous. It was some slick scheme. Jones would not have been surprised if Warren had asked him for the loan of a hundred dollars on the strength of the announcement. He had been buncoed before. He hated Sam already—now he mistrusted him as well.

"There are a few points upon which I want some expert information," Warren went on in his brisk way. "Can you tell me about how much grain is shipped out of the country within a radius of ten miles of Hillsboro each year?"

Jones could, and did. Soon he and Warren were immersed in figures, imports, exports, freight rates, possible increase in acreage, and an infinite variety of other details the Old Man had at his

fingers' ends. Finally Warren remarked:

"I suppose Hillsboro will be willing to coöperate with us in the matter of securing a right of way."

"Of course," Sam put in, "but if any attempt were made to hold up the railway for unreasonable prices, the right of eminent domain could be invoked."

"What's the right of eminent domain?" asked Jones.

"It is a law on the statute books by which it is provided that any improvement which is for the general good of a community cannot be blocked by a single party. Condemnation proceedings can be brought to secure the necessary land at a reasonable price set by the courts. But I, for one," Sam went on, "feel sure Hillsboro will appreciate the value of the road enough so that it will provide a right of way free of charge."

"There is just one point I have been thinking about in this connection," said Warren. "How about the cemetery up there? Is it owned by a church? If so, it might cause some trouble."

Old Man Jones looked at Sam and light broke in upon him.

"Is that the only way you can get through the hills?" he asked.

"Yes, without a long and expensive detour," said Warren.

"Well, I'll be gosh darned," Jones gasped.

"That cemetery is a little private enterprise of my own, Mr. Warren," Sam said—and smiled.

"Does this mean a hold-up?" the railway man asked. "I have been wondering all along what your interest is in this matter."

"Not necessarily. This railway plan has been in my head a long time. I saw where there was a big thing in it for your company to come in here by the back door, and simply grab this business away from the P. & P. N., for even if they do follow you in, the business will naturally go your way because you have better connections at the other end. I wasn't satisfied to make a big thing for the railway without making something for myself, so to guard against the possibility of your taking my idea without

adequate return, I hit upon the plan of bottling the route with a cemetery. Now my proposition is simply this: I want a position as assistant counsel to your system, with a contract for a long enough time to let me get a start in my profession. In exchange for that, you get the right-of-way into Hillsboro. If you refuse you will have to pay my price."

"Which is—?"

"Twenty-five thousand dollars."

"How about that right of eminent domain?" Jones asked.

"You tell him," Sam said. "I bought the property for an old hat and the back taxes, and I haven't the heart."

"The right of eminent domain cannot be applied to a burial ground," Warren explained.

If you were to sell a man a horse, thinking it was worth about seven cents at the glue factory, and the buyer won the English Derby with it, you might know how Old Man Jones felt. Let's not go into details. Why rub it in? In a vague sort of way he heard Warren talking to Sam.

"There will be no difficulty about that position," the railway man was saying. "It isn't every day we get an opportunity to pick up a young man with a constructive mind and imagination. Your first duty will be to secure the right of way into Hillsboro."

But the fight was not all gone out of Old Man Jones yet.

"Wait a minute, Mr. Lawyer. I guess I've got something to say in here. You undertook to have a cemetery started on that property in six months, an' there aint been a funeral there yet. The six months aint quite up yet, but Hillsboro looks pretty healthy to me, an' I'll gamble you don't get no burials. That bein' the case, I guess Mr. Warren will have a little deal to make with me as real owner of the cemetery."

"As prospective assistant counsel to the Hilliman system," Sam answered, "I would point out that your objection is answered by yourseif. If it is legally a cemetery it is mine, but if it isn't we don't care whose it is, because we can get our right of way anyhow."

"Well, I'll be gosh darned, if I thought of that!" Jones capitulated. He had been doing some fast thinking in the last few minutes, and decided that his other grievance was not so deep-rooted as he had thought. If Sam really was the cause of Sally's discontent, he must be interested in her, and if so, this interest, properly fostered, might easily grow into something more tangible and permanent. As a member of the family there were certain possibilities about Sam that had not previously been apparent.

"Sam, you aint the fool I took you for," he said after a pause, and they shook hands on it. "Come over and have supper with us to-night."

Sam accepted without hesitation, and wondered why he had done so. He supposed it was because he wanted to talk business with Jones, but—when the railway was completed, it was Sally who drove the golden spike.

As Warren was leaving Hillsboro a few hours later on that momentous occasion of his first visit, he drew Sam aside and asked:

"Am I to understand that there have been no burials in this little cemetery of yours?"

"The only thing buried there is a lot of Hillsboro advice which I could not possibly use," Sam said.

"But I thought I saw some long mounds."

"Possibly you did," said Sam with a sheepish smile. "I wanted to make it look nice and homelike."

The Marriage of Jinyo

BY ONOTO WATANNA

Author of "A Japanese Nightingale," etc

ISHIDA JINYO returned to Japan at the command of his father and the solicitation of his mother. Six years residence in the most modern city in the world had convinced the young man that it would be fatal and impossible for him to submit to rules and duties which, to his now enlightened mind, appeared mediæval.

Men of the modern lands married for love, he told himself fervently. He did not love this girl whom they had chosen for him, and whom he had never even seen. He loved one of the fair daughters of this wonderful land of his adoption. To his supreme joy, she had but recently expressed her willingness to become the Lady Ishida Jinyo. In a condition of youthful ecstasy he hastened to announce the fact to his honorable parents. Hardly had he despatched the letter, however, when he was seized with a sense of uneasiness.

Whatever his apprehensions as to the effect of the announcement upon his parents, he was hardly prepared for the sharp and drastic summons of his father to return to Japan at once. Something in the curt tone of the letter brought before him a memory of his father's unsmiling, impassive face. How quickly had he once rushed to obey the slightest word of command of that parent! Even now, instinctively, mechanically, he obeyed; but his young soul was filled with bitterness and rebellion as he made the journey across the waters. He told himself, repeatedly, that he was a different being from the one who had left Japan so willingly and gone out into the great unknown West. His eyes had been opened to new wonders and truths. He had drunk of an intoxicating fount! There had been much written and said

of the lure of the East; but the spell of the West was stronger, utterly irresistible. Not alone his clothes had changed, but his very mode of thought! He had learned to love! It would be impossible to resume the life of his boyhood, which seemed to him now like a dream.

With these thoughts in mind, he was unprepared for the effect upon him of the first sight of his home. As the rosy-tinted form of the white-robed Fuji-Yama traced its pure outline against the sky, Jinyo was conscious of an exciting throb. Loitering for a few days in Tokyo, the peculiar fascination of the home-land seemed to press itself upon him; unable to analyze it, he started upon the last stages of his journey and arrived at night in his home city, Kioto. As he passed through the familiar streets he felt like one awakening from a strange, long dream, very hard to shake off, and impossible to forget.

Threading in and out through the narrow, twisting streets, watching the shining bodies of his runners as they drew him up and up through the hill country which closes in about Kioto on all sides, Jinyo at last resigned himself to that delicious sense of awakening. Presently the runners had dropped the poles of the vehicle, and he had alighted before his father's house. His emotions strangled him. He could not speak, nor scarcely dared to look at the faces of his parents. The flutter of his mother's sleeves as she came down the path to meet him awoke in his breast old memories. His father's bald head, bowing to the level of Jinyo's knees, touched him to the soul. His mother was prostrating! He tried to return their deep obeisances, but it was six years since he had indulged in such exquisite courtesies. His

back and neck were stiff. He was painfully conscious of his American clothes, the derby hat, creased trousers, yellow gloves and shoes.

Jinyo put out his hands gropingly:
"Mother! Father!"

His voice was husky, unsteady. There was a pause. Then, her sweet voice trembling slightly, his mother spoke the simple words with which the polite Japanese greet each other when they meet:

"I pray you excuse my rudeness the last time we met."

And his father:

"It is a long time since I hung upon your honorable eye-brows."

This was his welcome home! There came up vividly before the young man a memory of his farewell with his American sweetheart and her family. They had kissed him—the mother and many sisters of the girl, and finally she herself! He blushed hotly at the very memory, and again felt that tingling thrill which had weakened and dazzled him then. How they had clung to his hands, thrown their arms about his neck, wept noisily!

Now his own parents mechanically bowed to him and murmured polite words of greeting. He felt the need, the thirsty desire for the warm expressions of that other land.

As he followed them up the path, something in his mother's drooping shoulders moved him. Stooping suddenly he looked into her face wistfully. There was a silvery light from the moon, and under its beam for a moment he saw clearly his mother's eyes. They were moist! Then he understood. It was he who had raised the barrier between them. It was he who had changed, who was queer—unnatural. He drew his mother back into the shadow of the wistaria grove, and as his father passed out of sight, Jinyo took her in his arms and kissed her!

"What is—that?" she stammered in a muffled voice, wiping with her sleeve her cheek where his lips had touched.

"An expression of—love!" he whispered huskily.

Timidly, she laid her hand upon his

arm, as if to restrain him, and her touch recalled the many times when, as a boy, her little hand had rested there, half chidingly, half pleadingly. In the dim light he could see that her eyes were shining.

"Pray thee excuse the honorable father from the new embrace, my son," she said, and there was a touch of anxiety in her voice. "It is"—she thought a moment, and tried to smile approvingly—"honorably comfortable, but—er—requiring scientific knowledge properly to appreciate."

At that he laughed, but there was an hysterical sound to his laughter. His father, hearing him, turned back. Jinyo, upon a sudden impulse, told him what he had done, and the comment of his mother. His father looked at him stolidly a moment, and then, the *samurai* calm of his face unbroken, he said, brusquely:

"The honorable father will endure the West embrace also."

With unblinking eyes, he solemnly lifted his face. Jinyo bent quickly and kissed him. Then, his heart feeling strangely light, he threw an arm about the shoulder of either parent, and three abreast, they went up the path.

In the doorway, above which a single lantern shed a ruddy light, a young girl awaited them. As Jinyo saw the little bowing figure, all his moodiness and misery returned upon him in a flood. His arms slipped, unconsciously, from his parents' shoulders. Almost he seemed about to retreat. He desired to retrace his steps, to go anywhere, save into his father's house, where, upon the very threshold, the one they had chosen for him awaited his coming.

The light of the lantern gleamed upon the glittering ornaments of her head and showed the two small hands submissively placed upon her knees; but it was impossible to see the girl's face. Slowly, shyly she retreated from the doorway, bowing at every step. Presently she had vanished into the house.

His father's voice was very cool and sturdy:

"Daughter of the Saito house of im-

perishable fame! It will be an honor to be allied to so august a family."

His mother's voice was timid, and the note of anxiety had deepened. Her eyes, too, entreated her son's gaze.

"She is as virtuous as she is beautiful, my son."

He started to speak, but bit back the passionate words. Not yet could he find it in him to drive the light from his father's face, the hope from his mother's.

They did not even consult him in regard to the celebrations in his honor. His father, a man of wealth, spared no expense in the matter. Invitations were despatched to even the most remote relatives and connections, and the entire Ishida family (one might say clan) gathered in Kyoto to celebrate the nuptials of Ishida Jinyo and Saito Ochika.

The very assurance and speed with which his father had pressed the preparations for the wedding, swept the young man from his feet. There seemed no opportunity, even had he found the courage, to declare himself, as, daily, he told himself he must do. Passive, filial obedience was what they seemed to expect of him. And so, with incredible speed the days passed away, and finally there came the ceremony of betrothal.

The house and extensive gardens were put into a holiday dress; thousands of butterflies purchased to illuminate the gardens were set free from their cages, while the geisha houses contributed of their best talent for the night.

There was an air of festivity in the entire neighborhood, over which the Ishida family dominated by reason of its ancestry, power and wealth.

Ochika was invisible, but it had already become the boast of the family that no lovelier bride in all Kyoto had ever entered the house of the dread ancestors. Certain it was that they would be propitiated, just as the heart of the bridegroom must inevitably be won.

Meanwhile, the sliding doors of his chamber securely fastened by an imported lock, the distracted bridegroom paced the floor. At his father's desire, he was garbed in the conventional dress of

the Japanese; but the *hakama* were awry, the dress badly fastened; for he had refused assistance from man or maid. He was biting his lips so cruelly that the blood started to the surface, and one hand, deep in the pocket of his sleeve, was clenched about a piece of paper. It was a letter that had come to him only that day, answering his own desperate summons to her to join him at once in Japan.

From day to day, he had gone along, passively, automatically obeying the voice of authority, just as he had done when a boy. To all true Japanese he was but doing his instinctive duty. Duty! That was the greatest word, so they said, in the entire language. It was greater than love, so they earnestly averred and believed. But, ah! in America, the land to which he believed he truly belonged, love was paramount! He felt that his weakness, cowardice, as he named it, would vanish were she but to come to him. Her presence would strengthen his vacillating will. Now, desperately, despairingly, his hand was clenched about the girl's answer to his appeal:

"There is only one way in which I can answer you," she had written. "Come to me here, in America, Jinyo. I cannot understand the Japanese code of honor. I only know we love each other, and that by every natural law and instinct you should be at my side. With your family hostile to me, can you really ask me to go to you in Japan? I cannot do that. It is your place to come to me. I give you the choice of two courses. Come to me—or give me up!"

It seemed to the agonized young man that two forces were dragging him in opposite directions. How ardently had he hoped she would understand the situation, and would help him! What should he do? What was his duty? Should he obey the impulse of desire and hasten to her side with the speed of wings?

It was not possible to put behind one the claims not alone of a lifetime, but of one's very ancestors. Nor could he disgrace the ones who had given him life.

Out in the gardens a geisha's voice shrilled sweetly. She was singing an ancient song of honor and supreme sacrifice. He opened a *shoji* and looked out. Everywhere the swinging lanterns were hung from eave and lintel, and strung down the long bamboo avenue. Like twinkling, fairy lights, the fireflies danced in and out among the trees. The buzz of murmuring voices, the moving figures of attending waitresses, the penetrating odor of the pipes, all the dimly familiar symbols of his early youth, dazzled him now. As on that first night when he had driven up to his father's house through the hills, Jinyo was conscious now of a sense of beguilement, almost of hypnotism. It was as if suddenly he had found a treasure, long-lost. Why, then, could he not rid his heart of this piercing ache?

His mother's voice called to him gently outside the screens. All through the evening she had sought to force the sliding screens apart, but the unyielding western lock held them firmly closed.

"Jinyo!" Her voice was barely above a whisper.

Now she was moistening the paper, scratching a hole in the *fusuma* (new and costly in his honor). Her lips were at the opening.

"Jinyo!"

"Mother?"

"They toast the honorable moon!"

Silence a moment; then he said gruffly:

"That is well."

"It is necessary," she pleaded, "that you lend prestige to the occasion with your honorable presence."

Silence again, and then he said less gruffly:

"I will come. Go before me, if you please."

Over the gardens the moon rode in lordly splendor. There was a clear, star-sprinkled sky, and the air was balmy and cool. A dancer, attended by her apprentice and maid, was posturing, her body, arms, hands and head, moving and swaying with a curious preciseness in the classical dance. There was, to Jinyo, a subtle fascination about her every move-

ment. Not the slightest twist or motion of even her smallest finger was lost upon him. It was incredible the effect obtained by the mere motion of the body. How the little sparkling hands seemed to speak! Was ever a neck or wrist more fragile! He found himself marveling at his ability to feel so keenly. Why, even the dancing of this geisha girl caused him a pang. Was it pleasure or pain—or both, he asked himself, and knew that it was because she was typical of Japan, the land he had believed he had put far behind him.

His father's face, benevolent, even smiling now, beamed at him from across the circle of guests. A lump rose in his throat, and the hand, clenched about the letter, loosened. Could he, publicly, turn against the honored parent?

The smiling, friendly gaze of those who wished him well, smote his heart. Was it possible to betray their confidence in him?

Why, these honorable guests who drank to his health and wished him ten thousand years of joy, were of his own blood, his kindred, his family! They were of one seed with him. The family honor, the ancestors' honor, this was what they had gathered together to celebrate!

His father was speaking, the relatives giving respectful attention to every word. Modestly, yet with a certain dignified pride, the head of the family sketched the honorable history of the illustrious ancestors.

"There is no seed to a great man!" The father of Jinyo quoted the ancient proverb reverently. At the same time he pointed out that while none could inherit greatness, it behooved the descendants to honor the exalted ones, by striving to imitate their virtues and talents. It was impossible to turn a deaf ear to the voices of the departed ones, who demanded that their race be honorably sustained. It was the supreme duty of the descendants to make the offerings and keep the race alive! Marriage was a sacred duty, not a matter of desire. Modern times had not, fortunately, effaced from the Japanese conscience the

supreme ideal of duty. His son, Jinyo, represented an honorable example of this, for, after six years residence in foreign lands, he had returned to Japan—to do his duty! The West lands might alter his clothes, his food, his point of view even, they could not change—his heart! That, happily, would remain through all time, pure Japanese!

In the pause that ensued the relatives refilled their pipes and swallowed countless thimblefuls of *saké*. They smiled significantly at one another, and whispered cheerfully among themselves. All knew of Jinyo's American predilections, and of his expressed desire to marry a daughter of that land; but one and all were confident that his wavering was but transient. Strange drinks intoxicate.

Now, pipes suspended, bowls inverted, attentively they awaited the speech of the bridegroom; for, suddenly, he had arisen unsteadily to his feet. Even in the shadowy light of the gardens, his eyes glittered strangely, and the pallor of his face was marked. His voice was hoarse. He seemed to be laboring under some intense excitement, no longer possible of repression.

"The frog in the pond knows not the great ocean," said the young man, "and, knowing it not, is happy in its pool. Transported to the great sea's bosom the hapless one, intoxicated by its vastness, must in the end become engulfed. So it is with the youth sent out into strange lands. Alas! the vast waters suck them into their heart, and it is not possible ever again completely to escape. The fate of the honorable frog has been that of the humble member of the honorable house of Ishida. He has tried, vainly, to dam up the ocean with his hand—but his hand is small, and 'the ocean ignores the dust.'"

He stopped, conscious of the effect of his words. The silence of the family was more eloquent than a torrent of noises. The unaccustomed *saké* rose to Jinyo's head, which seemed to swim in vertigo. He tried to speak further, but his tongue refused. Suffering intensely, aware of the disgrace of his visible emotion, a sob rose in his throat.

Suddenly, he became conscious that some one very close to him had whispered his name.

"Jinyo! Jinyo-sama!"

It might have been his mother's voice, so gentle, so coaxing, so wistful its tone. Like one in a dream, slowly he turned, and, for the first time, he beheld the face of his bride.

She was as pale as he, but in her long, dark eyes was a calm as soothing and sweet as a summer sea. The eyes of a Japanese woman are a veiled mystery, into which a man may not look, until his marriage day. The girl beside him had lifted the veil, and Jinyo saw! Such a sense of light flooded the being of the tempest-tossed Jinyo, he felt enervated, weakened. Reaching out his hand blindly, he felt it enclosed by hers, warm, pressing, comforting beyond expression.

His eyes wandered vaguely across the circle—embraced the surrounding scenery, lingered on the moving maids, the geishas tuning their instruments, and suddenly he ceased to struggle. His home—his own land had drawn him back! It alone was real, and all else that had come between was as a dim dream, soon to be blotted out. Looking at that precious circle of faces, he knew, with a glad, triumphant thrill, that he was part of it. In the eyes of the one, whose little hand rested confidently within his own, he had found the most precious treasure of life—peace!

The guests were bestirring themselves. It was growing very late. With repressed smiles, low chuckles, whispered assurances and, perhaps, a few tears, they were departing.

Something crinkled in the sleeve of Ishida Jinyo. Half absently he drew it out. For a moment he looked at it, almost curiously. Then, still abstractedly, he began to roll it into a little ball. As, suddenly, he snapped it with his fingers, so that it bounced into the air and disappeared, the girl beside him broke into low, silvery laughter, and Jinyo, looking into her deep eyes again, laughed with her.

The Late Vicissitudes of Wilbur Riddle

By Barton Wood Currie

Illustrations
by
Horace Taylor



WHEN Wilbur Riddle went up to the poor farm on Crutch Hill, back o' Thumb Point—Abe Slem, the oracle of Cedar Grove was speaking—his four nevvys, Lish Doggett, Lem Andrus, Dan'l Hubble an' Eli Polly told him he ought to consider they was still payin' for his keep as they paid more taxes nor any other fam'ly into the township. Eli Polly had kept him 'round his place as long as the old man could do the milkin' o' twelve cows an' not spill more 'n a pint a week. Eli were able to figger that his Uncle Wilbur saved him the hire o' one farm-hand an' earned his bed an' board an' the four ounces o' terbaccer allowed on Saturdays an' holidays. Eli's old Aunt Fanny Tull, onto his father's side, did the cookin' an' the rest o' the chores. She were likewise what you might call self-windin' an' some over, fer she didn't eat more 'n a bird an' had give up terbaccer becuz o' the asthma. Eli used to try an' tell Wilbur Riddle that he had asthma too, but the old man wouldn't listen to no argyments along them lines.

"I've had my pipe an' my chew sixty-four year," he'd say, "an' it 'd be mur-

der to cut me off." He 'd make that speech every day down into Gus Meyer's store, an' grindin' near as Eli Polly were, he didn't dare risk the scandal it 'd made to cut off that allowance o' terbaccer, especial as he'd brow-beat Lish, Lem an' Dan'l into payin' their share o' the cost by threatenin' to send the old man to live onto them.

It were the week arter Wilbur Riddle got the palsy into his milkin' arm that he went up to the poor farm. He'd spilt eight quarts o' milk into four days an' Eli Polly jest missed havin' a stroke.

O' course, there were some talk about the stinginess o' them four nevvys, owin' to the fact that they was all well-fixed an' had money in the bank. Eli got critercized the most, 'cause he on'y had hisself to look arter. Lish Doggett had two daughters an' a second wife; Lem Andrus had a third wife an' two stepsons able to work but not likin' it, an' Dan'l Hubble had jest married a widder what demanded feathers onto her hats an' a new silk dress oncet a year.

Eli, Lish, Lem an' Dan'l were in Gus Meyer's store when George Henery

Smith read out o' the *Newark Sunday Call* that Wilbur Riddle had been left \$80,000 into the will o' a silver-mine owner what he used to tend mules fer out in Colorado. Wilbur Riddle had lived into one o' them silver mines fer ten years. He were kicked by a mule while the owner o' the mine were in Europe. Wilbur come back to Cedar Grove not knowin' what had happened to him, on'y that he'd been kicked by a mule. That mule had kicked the mem'ry o' part o' his past clear out o' his mind an' he never read none o' the advertisements into the newspapers durin' the time that Colorado man were lookin' fer him to reward him fer his long an' faithful services.

Arrivin' back to his boyhood home Wilbur Riddle jest said he'd come back East an' then shut up tighter 'n a rivet. Some folks thought he were concealin' a crime he'd committed an' others spekerlated that he were jest an ornery old cuss what took uncommon delight in rousin' curiosity an' not satisfyin' it.

George Henery Smith read the news o' that will an' fortune three times afore Wilbur Riddle's four nevvys would believe he warn't inventin' the words. Then they took turns readin' it over to theirselves till they could see the printed words burnin' into their brains with their eyes shut.

"It aint true," says Eli Polly, final. "It's one o' them onpractical jokes."

"It's a schemin' trick to git more money out o' us," Lish Doggett chips in. "They want us to believe that old fossil has got more money comin' to him so he kin borry."

"He wont git none out o' me," says Dan'l Hubble. "He's et ernuff terbaccer I paid fer to keep a team o' horses goin'."

"You aint paid fer no more o' his terbaccer nor I have," snaps Lem Andrus, "an' my missus has knitted him mittens goin' on three year."

It were Eli Polly who started the bickerin', an' jest as soon as he saw it goin' strong he slipped behind the counter silent as a snake an' made the purchase o' a pound o' terbaccer an' a

twenty-five-cent pipe. Then he moved out the back door like a shadder, jumped into his buggy an' drove like one o' them circus chariot racers up to the poor farm. He were just that much slicker nor Lem, Lish an' Dan'l to fetch an idea into their heads an' leave 'em argyin' over it while he got a five-mile lead onto 'em. He were gallopin' his colt into the gate o' the poor farm afore they missed him, an' they didn't wake up total afore Rollo Rollins come in an' said:

"Must be some one what owes Eli Polly money movin' out o' Cedar Grove. Passed him on the Gap road drivin' like he didn't care a hinge fer the valyer o' horseshoes."

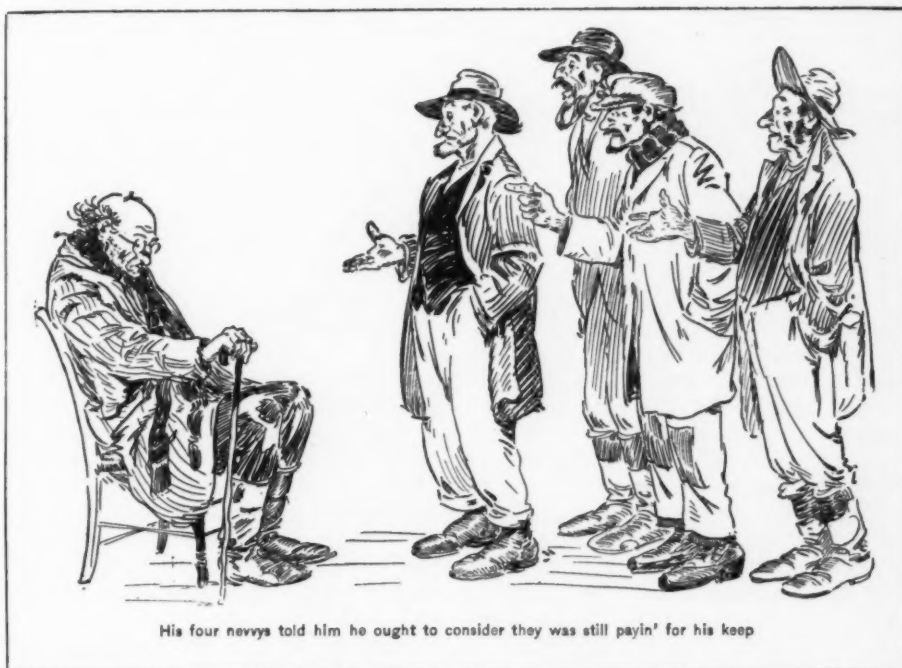
"Did he turn up Crutch Hill?" yells Lish, Lem an' Dan'l.

"Reckon he did," laughs Gus Meyer, "an' he's got a pound o' terbaccer an' a two-bit pipe he bought fer his Uncle Wilbur while you boys was debatin'."

If Eli Polly made good time behind that high-steppin' colt o' his, Lish, Lem an' Dan'l clipped minutes offen his record. Eli warn't paced an' were jest drivin' agin time. Lish, Lem an' Dan'l were racin' reg'lar, takin' turns at settin' the pace. Lem were leadin' up Crutch Hill when his mare threw a shoe an' went lame. Lish an' Dan'l run it out with the inside hubs touchin' clear to the gate. Then they pulled up an' walked their horses inside like they'd jest dropped by cashul.

Old Wilbur Riddle were sittin' on the front porch, pullin' away on the new pipe Eli had brought him an' blowin' smoke rings. Eli had jest asked him if he wouldn't like to go back to Cedar Grove an' live with him, an' Wilbur were thinkin' it over.

"I been doin' some figgerin' sence I been up here," the old man says final, "an' that figgerin' proves into multiplication an' addition that durin' the five year I lived onto your place I milked 200,000 quarts o' milk. By dividin' two into that I git 400,000 pints an' by dividin' agin I git 1,600,000 gills. Out o' all that milk you give me two gills a day to drink, in consequence o' which I drunk 456 quarts an' 2 gills. Up here



His four nevvys told him he ought to consider they was still payin' for his keep

I git a pint o' milk a day an' all I got to do is to sit 'round an' breathe comfortable. Much obliged fer the invertation, Eli, but I reckon I'll stay onto the poor farm."

"But you wont have to milk nor nothin'," cries Eli, pantin' eager. (He could see them racin' buggies comin' up the hill.) "You kin have all the milk you can drink," Eli shouts, "an' as fer terbaccer, I told Gus Meyer to let you help yourself free-hand."

Then the others rushes up.

"Here's some o' Gus Meyer's fancy plug an' thirty-cent pipes, Uncle Wilbur," they says together, an' then turns an' glares at Eli Polly like he were a rattlesnake what had bit 'em. Eli looks back at 'em similar. It were all he could do to hold hisself from shoutin' at Lish Doggett and Dan'l Hubble, "I got him first!" an' it were all Lish an' Dan'l could do to hold theirselves from grabbin' Wilbur Riddle an' haulin' him aboard their buggies. Eli Polly were the first to speak. He says, puffin' out his cheeks an' snappin' his eyes:

"Uncle Wilbur is a-goin' to leave the poor farm an' come back to live with me."

"An' milk twelve cows a day!" barks Lish Doggett.

"An' feed the pigs an' chickens!" snaps Dan'l Hubble.

All the old men o' the farm had come out onto the porch to listen an' those on 'em as had forgotten their ear trumpets rushed back into their rooms to git 'em. Pretty soon Old Joel Grindle, the manager of the farm, come out an' asks Wilbur Riddle what's the row.

"Plumb busted if I kin make head nor fist out o' it," replies Wilbur Riddle, who had sort o' come to an' grabbed all the terbaccer an' pipes like he feared they would fade out o' a dream. "There's sunthin' strange come over these nevvys o' mine," he goes on, "fer they no sooner rush me up here an' tell me how nice it'll be to have company o' my own age, nor here they come back fightin' to see which on 'em can have the pleasure o' my keep. Some un must have left me money."

"Huh!" sniffs Joel Grindle. "Who'd leave you money, Wilbur Riddle? You aint got no rich relations I ever hearn tell on. Mebbe it's a joke that's been played onto these nevvys o' yourn. Mebbe some un's put a piece into the paper that you been left a fortune. There's been a dozen cases like that sence I been manager o' this poor farm."

"*What!*" yells Eli, Lish an' Dan'l into one breath, staggerin' back off the porch.

"Yes, it's done frequent," Joel Grindle fires at 'em, "an' it allus shows up the relations o' my guests fer what they are. Why, there was the case o' Edgar Ham—" But Eli, Lish an' Dan'l didn't wait fer no more.

If Eli, Lish an' Dan'l had only gone home the way they come they'd 'a' had different thoughts into their heads concernin' their Uncle Wilbur when they turned into bed that night. They'd 'a' met Lem Andrus leadin' his mare up Crutch Hill an' talkin' to a young chap who was drivin' a white horse to one o' them fancy little rigs with bicycle wheels.

Lem had got out o' his buggy an' were rubbin' his mare's leg when the stranger come along an' asked the way to the poor farm.

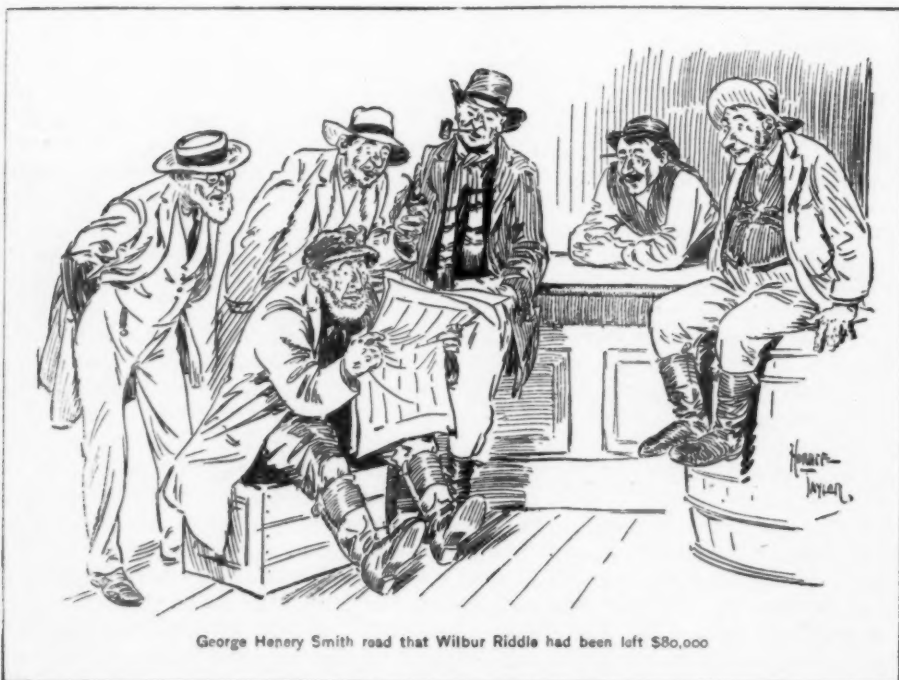
"I'm tryin' to locate Mr. Wilbur Riddle," says the young chap, "an' I been directed to the poor farm. I got good news fer him."

"About that \$80,000 will?" asked Lem.

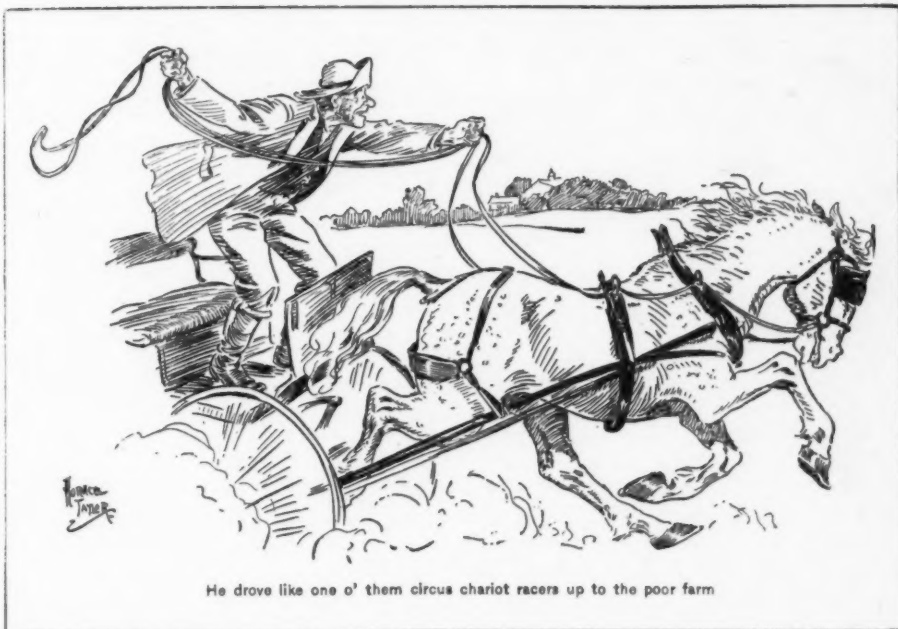
"That's it," says the young chap. "I come on from Denver to locate Mr. Riddle an' turn over the property. Reckon you know him?"

"Know him!" cries Lem Andrus. "I'm one o' his nevvys an' next o' kin. I were the only one o' his nevvys what fought ag'in' his goin' to the poor farm. I offered him a good home into my cottage, but Eli, Lish an' Dan'l talked him out o' it. They p'isoned him ag'in' me. They're up onto the farm now—broke their necks a'most gittin' up there when they read into the newspaper about that money. I wouldn't be surprised if they'd kidnaped him afore now."

That young chap breaks out laughin', but Lem Andrus continues, steamin' ser'us, an' asks:



George Henry Smith read that Wilbur Riddle had been left \$80,000



He drove like one o' them circus chariot racers up to the poor farm

"Air you a ly-yer, young feller?"

"Yes," says the young chap, still grin-nin'. "Were you thinkin' o' hirin' me to habus corpse your uncle out o' the clutches o' your cousins?"

"Kin it be done?" asks Lem.

"Better wait an' see if Mr. Riddle is kidnaped," says the young chap, an' pretty soon they turns into the poor farm gate. There's an old man by the gate Lem Andrus knows an' he grabs hold o' him an' asks:

"Air Eli, Lish an' Dan'l gone?"

"There's their dust settlin' onto the hill yonder," says the old chap. "They drove off 'most as fast as they come."

"An' were Uncle Wilbur along of 'em?" Lem Andrus chokes out, swayin' like he were on the point o' topplin' over. But it didn't take more'n a word to snap the life back into him an' send him whirlin' up the path to the poor farm porch. His Uncle Wilbur were there, all right, chucklin' away to a lot o' his old cronies over the joke what had been played onto Eli, Lish an' Dan'l. Afore the old man could turn 'round Lem Andrus were pumpin' both his arms an' talkin' like a buzz-saw.

"I brung the ly-yer along o' me," Lem shouts. "I hired him special an' brought him all the way out o' Denver, Colorado. He's got all the deeds an' dokkermints regardin' that fortune what were left you an' he says you're to come down to my place where we got a room all fixed up fer you. We been fixin' up that room fer a month, Uncle Wilbur," Lem goes on lyin', "an' I were a-goin' to bring you down last night on'y my mare went lame. Where's your room so I kin fetch your truck?" An' afore Wilbur Riddle kin so much as burble, that nevvie o' his has packed his little valise an' heaved it into the buggy.

As fer that young ly-yer chap an' old Joel Grindle, Lem Andrus jest swept 'em off their feet. Bein' as he were the on'y next o' kin on the job they couldn't offer no objections ag'in' his invitin' Wilbur Riddle down to his cottage. Wilbur Riddle hisself didn't say a word. The notion o' gittin' riches like a stroke o' lightnin' couldn't square into his mind, an' his ideas stayed down like they was drowned till he found hisself sittin' into Lem Andrus' big arm-chair with Lem Andrus' third wife handin'

him a tray o' hot biscuits an' tea, with cream an' sugar on the side. Lem Andrus' young stepson had pulled off his boots an' put soft slippers onto his feet an' the hired-girl were tearin' the spare room apart gittin' ready fer him.

If you kin put any trust into the word o' that Andrus fam'ly, that old man et fourteen hot biscuits an' drunk five cups o' tea afore he spoke an' asked if he could go out onto the back porch an' smoke.

"You kin smoke right here into this parlor, Uncle Wilbur," says Sary Ann Andrus. "A man o' your years has got to be notioned. Lem give partikerler orders you could smoke anywheres you wanted to," she goes on, lookin' twicet as earnest as customary when tellin' the truth. "I reckon Lem told you," she winds up, "that we'd been fixin' to bring you down from the farm fer more'n a month."

Wilbur Riddle said he felt as if he'd dreamed o' sunthin' like that on'y he warn't sure. He warn't sure o' nothin' save his appetite fer about six days an' he went through all o' that notary business with the young ly-yer chap like he were waitin' fer the bad end o' a nightmare. But when the light broke on him final, an' he realized he had money into his pockets an' into the bank, he just chucked ten years off'n his shoulders an' begun orderin' Lem an' Sary Ann Andrus around like he'd allus been in the habit o' it.

Soon as his mem'ry come back arter the first shock he were asked if he could reckerlect anythin' about workin' fer that millionaire what had left him the fortune. He shook his head an' said he couldn't remember more'n one day o' his life in the West, the day he were kicked by the mule.

"I kin recall," he says, snappin' his lips together, "comin' to Cedar Grove an' milkin' twelve cows a day fer Eli Polly."

"It aint nat'ral you'll ever forgit *that*, Uncle," sniffs Sary Ann Andrus. "Eli Polly kept you herded onto that place of his like you were a sheep. Lem says Eli never give you none o' them hun-

dreds o' invertations fer special dinners an' parties we sent you."

Wilbur Riddle give a start an' looked up at his niece out o' one eye. There warn't a cloud onto his mem'ry appertainin' to the way his four nevvys had treated him afore they took him up to the poor farm. Pretty soon he says:

"I'm pleased to hear about them invertations, Sary Ann, but what were the matter with Lem that he couldn't speak out on 'em. He used to speak loud ernuff about payin' fer my terbaccer down into Gus Meyer's store."

Sary Ann had to go out to the kitchen so sudden she warn't able to answer. Wilbur Riddle told me this an' a lot o' stuff that made him chuckle an' wink his eyes when I'd stop by to have a chat with him.

"Funny, I haint seen nothin' o' Eli, Lish an' Dan'l," he says to me one day. "I been wantin' to thank 'em fer them pipes they brung up to the farm. I want to tell 'em I'm a-goin' to leave 'em them pipes into my will."

They was certain'y as bright an' cheerful days fer Lem Andrus as they was cruel an' bitter fer Eli, Lish an' Dan'l. Lem looked onto that \$80,000 same as if it were deposited into the bank in his own name, an' when one o' them insurance agents come along an' read from a book o' figgers that Wilbur Riddle didn't have one chance into a hundred o' livin' more'n five years he couldn't sit into church without laughin'.

Howsomever, perpetchal smilin' aint reg'lar to the course o' human events. The smiles o' the Andruses begun to slack off some when they noticed that Wilbur Riddle were makin' eyes at the widder Triffitt next door an' demandin' that she be invited in to tea an' supper three an' four times a week.

Sary Ann Andrus an' the widder Triffitt were thicker'n parsley afore Lem brought his rich uncle down from the poor farm. They kissed every time they met an' agreed perfect in tearin' down the character o' all the other women folk in Cedar Grove. The widder Triffitt were goin' on sixty, but she were

plump an' round an' pleasant to look at. There was red into her cheek an' sparkle into her eye an' she paid fancy prices fer her teeth, which fit her perfect an' give her smile a lot o' quality.

O' course, Lem an' Sary Ann kept watch onto the old man like a pair o' hawks. Whenever he'd go over to call on the widder he couldn't shake 'em off.

But the Andruses didn't hang on to Wilbur Riddle any closer nor Wilbur Riddle hung on to his money. The near-

an' in sight an' hearin' o' Lem an' Sary Ann.

"My dear Mr. Riddle," she begun, takin' one o' his hands an' pettin' it, "we're both pretty lonely livin' by ourselves, aint we?"

She looked round, smilin' sort o' sweet an' sorrowful, to see the effect o' her words on Lem an' Sary Ann. They looked back at her like they'd been poisoned by some drug o' the most vi'lent kind.



est he come to givin' Lem Andrus a dollar was to let him look at his bank books an' help him figger out his interest. He bought his own clothes, mail-order, an' got his terbaccer wholesale. Twicet a week he'd make Lem drive him up to the poor farm an' watch him hand out dollar bills to all o' the inmates. He didn't pay board an' his appetite, accordin' to Lem, equaled the appetite o' two prize fighters.

This were the way things stood at the Andrus cottage when the widder Triffitt proposed marriage to Wilbur Riddle onto Lem Andrus's own porch

"I know," she goes on, drippin' her words like honey, "that your nevvie an' niece find it a trial an' a triberlation to keep you into their cottage. They used to tell me afore you went up to the poor farm how terrible it'd be if they ever had an old dodderer—they were Sary Ann Andrus's own words, my dear friend—like you to live onto 'em. But you aint, an' never could be, a dodderer to me," she sighs, strokin' his hands like she were polishin' 'em, "an' it's only fer you to say the word, Wilbur Riddle. I'll devote the rest o' my days to makin' you happy."

Wilbur Riddle had a hull crowd o' smiles packed into the wrinkles o' his face an' his eyes was drippin' tears o' joy. He were jest beginnin' to move his lips when Lem Andrus jumped out o' his chair an' shouted:

"Don't listen to her, Uncle Wilbur! It aint possible! It'd be a crime to marry a man o' your years. It aint decent nor nat'ral."

"An' she's only arter your money," joins in Sary Ann.

At that Wilbur jumps to his feet an' shouts:

"It'd be a crime to marry a man o' my years, eh? She's arter my money, eh? Well, she'll git it, by ding, an' she'll wear the name o' Wilbur Riddle afore the sun goes down onto Crutch Hill!"

He were standin' to the full o' his six feet, lookin' like an old war horse what had riz to the bugle. The widder Triffitt rushed out o' her chair an' were throwin' her arms around his neck when a new voice, sharper'n a bullet, come ringin' through the air.

"There's only one female into this nor any other town what'll wear the name o' Wilbur Riddle, an' that's *me!*"

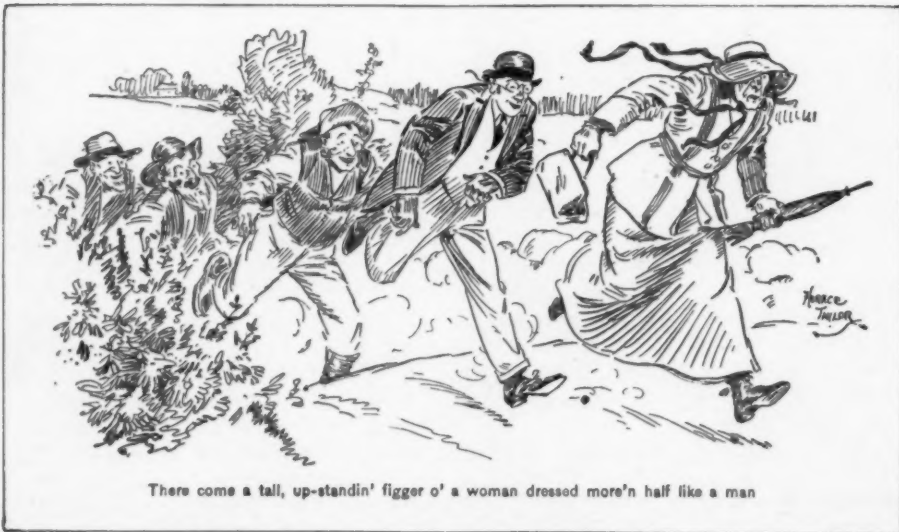
That voice came through the openin' in the privet hedge afore Lem Andrus's cottage, an' there come in with it a tall

up-standin' figger o' a woman dressed more'n half like a man. She had been comin' up the road on a dog trot, followed by that young ly-er chap together with Eli Polly, Lish Doggett an' Dan'l Hubble.

"So, I've found you, Wilbur Riddle," she lashes out, boundin' up onto the porch and scatterin' Lem and Sary Ann an' the widder Triffitt like they were broomsticks. "I've found you," she repeats, swingin' her umbrella, "onto the verge o' committin' bigamy. Goin' to erlope with a widder, hey, an' leave me an' your five children you abandoned into Cripple Creek to starve?"

Wilbur Riddle had been starin' at the strange female with dropped jaw an' bulgin' eye till she named Cripple Creek. He went down afore that word like an anvil had been tossed onto him. The mem'ry the mule had kicked out o' him had come back in a flash an' he jest crumbled up into his chair, tossin' an' moanin'.

When his Aunt Regina Wilbur showed her marriage papers to Lem Andrus he give a little cry an' passed into a swoon, an' the last thing he looked onto as his eyes snapped shut were the faces o' Eli, Lish an' Dan'l grinnin' at him over the hedge.



There come a tall, up-standin' figger o' a woman dressed more'n half like a man

Lorraine Frost as *Eva Flower*
and William H. Crane as
Senator Christopher Larkin
in "The Senator Keeps
House"



Photograph by White, New York

MIDWINTER IN THE THEATRES

by Louis V. De Foe

FOR the first time since Macready passed out of the public view, three-quarters of a century ago, a drama has achieved the unique distinction of being hissed, cat-called and bombarded off the stage of a New York theatre. Our distant forbears, when they sought diversion at the plays, were wont, on frequent occasions, to take militant personal issue with the luckless mummers who offended their view of what was appropriate before the footlights. Then, it was not unusual for dramatic criticism to be expressed in decayed vegetable tributes delivered by the quickest and most direct route, the efficacy of which depended upon the marksmanship of the individual critic.

The decline of this boisterous custom was brought about largely by the change of theatre-going into a polite social function. Undoubtedly also, the inevitable division of opinion in the audience as to the validity and justice of the criticism thus vegetably expressed had something to do with it. There has seldom been a play, or a performance of one, which has not been open to two differing sets of views. However that may be, the practice of raising a ruction when the performance proved distasteful to a part of its audience long ago went out of fashion in favor of the decorous silence which now betokens disapprobation. It was believed to be dead beyond resuscitation

until Lady Gregory's enthusiastically heralded Irish Players, from the cradle of Erin's new dramatic and literary renaissance, the Abbey Theatre of Dublin, came to New York and by their production of J. M. Synge's fantastical romance, "The Playboy of the Western World," stirred a tempest of what many Irish-Americans declare to be justifiable patriotic resentment.

The disturbance furnished a remarkable experience for the disinterested part of the audience. The play had not been in progress ten minutes before potatoes, carrots, asafoetida and red pepper filled the air. A dozen of the rioters were arrested and fifty others were thrown out of the theatre. Meanwhile the performance was brought to a standstill and begun all over again, although the chorus of groaning and hissing was kept up until the final curtain. The subsequent performances were left unmolested, however.

The strongest objection by the Gaelic opponents of the play is directed against the character of *Christy Mahon*. They charge that, by representing as a hero this youth who boasts vaingloriously that he has killed his father, a deliberate attempt has been made to vilify the Irish race. A further complaint is that the general effect of the story is to place Celtic life and character in an unfavorable and false light. The other side of the controversy is that *Christy Mahon*, the incorrigible young braggart and iridescent dreamer, is a liar for the mere sake of his fantastic lies. He fascinates the simple country-side girls for a time, only to be toppled ingloriously from his pedestal in the end, when his irate and much-alive father unexpectedly arrives to unmask him and brand him ignominiously as a worthless young rascal. Though the girls at first believe his extravagant tales, the audience is made aware that he is not a parricide. As for the play casting an intentional slur upon Irish life and character, its adherents argue that the quaintly humorous imagery of its poetic lines and its picturesque peasant scenes are merely intended to express, in terms of the people with which Synge was most familiar

and which appealed with greatest vividness to his imaginative sense, certain traits which by no means are limited to Ireland but are universal throughout the



Photograph by

Cathleen Nesbitt as *Honor Brady*; J. A. O'Rourke as *Jimmy Farrell*—

human family. In this respect "The Playboy" is not unlike "Bunty Pulls the Strings," which no Scotchman, however loyal to the land of the thistle and the heather, has so much as dreamed of resenting. Racial bias aside, and disinterestedly considered, "The Playboy of the Western World" is a bristling example of Irish humor and a notable contribution to Irish literature.

On a lonely country road in a remote part of County Mayo and hard by the sea, is the shebeen, or public house, of *Michael James Flaherty*, a jolly, con-



White, New York

—J. M. Kerrigan as *Shawn Keogh*; Sydney J. Morgan as *Old Mahon* and Sara Allgood as *Widow Quin*, in "The Playboy of the Western World"

vivial publican, who has long ministered to the thirst of the humble dwellers on that wild coast. With him lives his buxom daughter, *Margaret*, known as *Pegeen Mike*, who brews the poteen and polishes the pewter mugs on the bar. It is night and *Michael James* is in a dilemma, for *Kate Cassidy* is dead in her cottage over the sands, and what true son of Erin will permit his neighbor to be laid away unwaked, or himself to travel back home in the early hours of the dawn without having taken a drop too much as a balm for his grief? But

some one must stay at the tavern with *Pegeen Mike*, to protect her in his absence from the bogies of the dark.

Pegeen Mike is to be married to *Shawn Keogh*, an awkward, dull farmer of the neighborhood, as soon as *Father Reilly* obtains the bishop's dispensation. It is *Shawn's* arrival that seems to settle the question of *Pegeen Mike's* protection. Note the quaintness of the dialogue:

MICHAEL—Sit down now, and take your rest. And how is it you are, Shawn Keogh? Are you coming over

the sands to Kate Cassidy's wake?

SHAWN—I am not, Michael James. I'm going home the short cut to my bed.

PEGEEN—He's right, too, and have you no shame, Michael James, to be quitting off for the whole night, and leaving myself lonesome in the shop?

MICHAEL—Isn't it the same whether I go for the whole night or a part only? And I'm thinking it's a queer daughter you are if you'd have me crossing backward through the Stooks of the Dead Woman, with a drop taken.

PEGEEN—If I am a queer daughter, it's a queer father'd be leaving me lonesome these twelve hours of dark, and I piling the turf, with the dogs barking, and the calves mooing, and my own teeth rattling with the fear.

JIMMY—What is there to hurt you, and a fine, hardy girl would knock the head of any two men in the place?

PEGEEN—Isn't there the harvest boys with their tongues red for drink, and the ten tinkers is camped in the east glen, and the thousand militia—bad cess to them!—walking idle through the land? There's lots surely to hurt me, and I won't stop alone in it, let himself do what he will.

MICHAEL—If you're that afeared, let Shawn Keogh stop along with you. It's the will of God, I'm thinking, himself should be seeing to you now.

SHAWN—I would and welcome, Michael James, but I'm afeared of Father Reilly; and what at all would the Holy Father and the Cardinals of Rome be saying if they heard I did the like of that?

MICHAEL—God help you! Can't you sit in by the hearth with the light lit and herself beyond in the room? You'll do that surely, for I've heard tell there's a queer fellow above, going mad or getting his death, maybe, in the grips of the ditch, so she'd be safer this night with a person here.

The noise *Michael James* has heard in the ditch is partly the secret of *Shawn's* reluctance. But soon the mystery is solved by the arrival of a handsome, swaggering young fellow who begs a pot of porter and a haven for the night. He is *Christy Mahon*, a stranger in the neighborhood, and his gallant demeanor instantly makes an impression on the occupants of the tavern.

To inquiries about himself *Christy* replies mysteriously and boastfully. At first they believe him to be one of the ten tinkers camped over in the glen.

Then they suspect that, perhaps, he is an informer or other fugitive from the law. This conjecture seems reasonable to all save *Pegeen Mike*. Her taunt that he is a soft lad, the like of which "wouldn't slit the windpipe of a sow," brings forth *Christy's* astounding tale.

CHRISTY—You're not speaking the truth.

PEGEEN MIKE—Not speaking the truth, is it? Would you have me knock the head of you with the butt of a broom?

CHRISTY—Don't strike me. I killed my poor father, Tuesday was a week, for doing the like of that.

PEGEEN—Is it killed your father?

CHRISTY—With the help of God I did surely, and that the Holy Immaculate Mother may intercede for his soul. He was a dirty man, God forgive him, and he getting old and crusty, the way I couldn't put up with him at all.

PEGEEN—And you shot him dead?

CHRISTY—I did not then. I just riz the loy and let fall the edge of it on the ridge of his skull, and he went down at my feet like an empty sack, and never let a grunt or groan from him at all.

Christy's boastful tale, so unlike the cowardice of the supine *Shawn*, has its instant effect upon *Pegeen Mike* who insinuates that, if her reluctant sweetheart will not remain at the tavern, the intrepid and daring stranger will furnish her the needed protection. *Michael James*, likewise, is favorably impressed with the handsome lad. With *Pegeen Mike's* departure to the altar, he will need a new potboy, and he is moved to offer the position to *Christy*, with assurances that he will be safe from the searching law. *Pegeen Mike* is not slow to fall in with this economical idea, for she has become vastly fascinated with the handsome, boastful youth whose stories have appealed to her romantic imagination. The upshot is that she drives away her sweetheart, who protests and declares that he will summon the *Widow Quin* to be her protector. And *Shawn* having been disposed of, *Michael James* and his cronies set out for the wake, confident that *Pegeen Mike* will be safe in the care of a youth who has dared to do a bloody deed and is brave enough also to acknowledge it.



Photograph by White, New York

Sara Allgood as *Widow Quin* in "The Playboy of the Western World"

The pair, left alone, talk for a time, *Christy* reveling in vivid accounts of his miraculous adventures, which, it is only too plain, are spun out of his lurid imagination. Then, when the turf on the hearth begins to burn low, *Pegeen Mike* goes into her room and shuts the door behind her, and *Christy* stretches himself on the quilt before the fireplace, remarking with a twinkle in his eye:

"Well, it's a clean bed and soft with it, and it's great luck and company I've won me in the end of time—a fine woman fighting for the likes of me—till I'm thinking this night wasn't I a foolish fellow not to kill my father in the years gone by."

Bright and early next morning *Christy*, who is secretly astonished at the unexpected success of his romancing, is up and doing, making himself neat before the mirror, industriously polishing the bottles and pewters on the bar, and resolving to make the best possible use of his great luck. *Shawn Keogh*, the mystified and much disturbed swain, has already spread among the village girls a report of *Christy's* thrilling tale, and, long before *Pegeen Mike* is stirring, a whole bevy of them, convoyed by the garrulous *Widow Quin*, who sees a chance for herself with the stranger, descends upon the tavern.

The girls want to hear for themselves the account of *Christy's* exploit and he is only too willing to accommodate them. He tells his tale over and over again, and with each repetition come new embellishments. His soaring imagination even creates a romantic provocation for his deed, as he goes on to explain that it had been caused by his father's command to him "to walk down and promise to marry the *Widow Casey* in a score of days."

"And what kind was she?" asks the *Widow Quin*.

"A walking terror from the hills beyond, and she two score and five years, and two hundredweights and five pounds in the weighing scales, with a limping leg on her and a blinded eye."

"And what did he want, driving you to wed with her?" they inquire.

"He was letting on I was wanting a

protector from the harshness of the world, and he without a thought the whole while but how he'd have her hut to live in and her gold to drink," replies *Christy*.

Whereupon the girls vote him a marvel and the *Widow Quin* declares she will have him entered for the parish games which are to be held on the sands of the beach that afternoon when the tide is low.

When *Shawn* arrives and discovers the rapid progress which the lad has made in his sweetheart's affections, his dull brain begins to ponder over a means of getting rid of so dangerous a rival. He draws for *Christy* a threatening picture of *Pegeen Mike's* sharp temper, but to no avail. Then he essays to bribe him to quit the country, with a promise of a ticket to the Western States.

SHAWN—Do you see that, mister?

CHRISTY—The half of a ticket to the Western States!

SHAWN—I'll give it to you and my new hat; and my breeches with the double seat; and my new coat is woven from the blackest shearings for three miles around; I'll give you the whole of them, and my blessing, and the blessing of Father Reilly itself, maybe, if you'll quit from this place and leave us in the peace we had till last night at the fall of dark.

At last, after *Christy* has left the room, *Shawn*, now in desperation, thinks himself of the *Widow Quin*.

SHAWN—Oh, *Widow Quin*, will you find me some contrivance when I've promised you a ewe?

WIDOW QUIN—A ewe's a small thing, but what would you give me if I did wed him and save you so?

SHAWN—You?

WIDOW QUIN—Aye. Would you give me the red cow you have and the mountainy ram, and the right of way across your rye path, and a load of dung at *Michelmas*, and turbary upon the western hill?

SHAWN—I would surely, and I'd give you the wedding-ring I have, and the loan of a new suit, the way you'd have him decent on the wedding day. I'd give you two kids for your dinner, and a gallon of poteen, and I'd call the piper on the long car to your wedding from *Crossmolina* or from *Ballina*. I'd give you—

WIDOW QUIN—That'll do so, and let you whisht, for he's coming now again.



Photograph by White, New York

Eithne MaGee as *Margaret Flaherty* in "The Playboy of the Western World"

The *Widow Quin*, in truth, has already resolved to capture the swaggering stranger as a husband and a comfort for her old age. It is time for *Shawn* to measure the race-course for the games on the beach, and she takes advantage of his departure to approach *Christy* with tender blandishments. But when *Christy* is holding the designing widow in the thrall of another of his romanc-

ing tales, he turns pale, hesitates, and darts behind the door as *Old Mahon* himself, somewhat dilapidated but far from dead, presents himself at the threshold to inquire if his runaway son has been seen passing that way.

Now follows an amusing scene in which *Old Mahon*, bit by bit, exposes the audacious romancer as a lying, cowardly, shiftless, ungrateful cub, who will



Photograph by White, New York

Harrison Hunter as *Dr. Bristol* and Helen Ware as *Ethel Toscani* in "*The Price*"

feel the sting of the paternal shillelah on his back as soon as he is caught. But the *Widow Quin*, in spite of these exposures, will not be denied her matrimonial prey. So she contrives to send *Old Mahon* away on a wrong scent just as the village girls return to bear *Christy* off in triumph to the parish games.

It is afternoon of the same day when the curtain rises on the final act. *Michael*

James and his tipsy cronies have come staggering back from *Kate Cassidy's* wake, having picked up a stranger on the way who proves to be none other than the elder *Mahon*. They have brought him into the tavern and heard, over a consoling pot of porter, the story of his ill treatment by an ungrateful son, but have made no attempt to discover his identity. Exultant cries are

ringing from the beach, for *Christy*, now inspired to action by the adulation of which he is the target, is proving himself a real hero by winning all the games.

The commotion attracts the attention of the tipplers in the tavern and from the window they watch the exciting sports until *Old Mahon*, dumfounded, suddenly recognizes the gallant champion as his fugitive son. Whereupon the others conclude that he must be going mad and restrain him, but he breaks away from them and rushes out, just as the crowd pours in, escorting *Christy* and proclaiming him the champion of all the world. Presently he and *Pegeen Mike* are left alone and, emboldened by his victories, he ventures to declare his love for the girl in a scene that is notable for its poetic imagery, and quaint and homely charm.

Love's dream has its sudden, cruel awakening when *Old Mahon*,



Photograph by White, New York
Warner Oland as *Stanard Dole* and Helen Ware
as *Ethel Toscani* in "The Price"

just as *Christy* and *Pegeen Mike* have asked her father's blessing, rushes into the tavern and beats the boy with all the might of his outraged paternal wrath. The dumfounded "Playboy" struggles up, makes a vain attempt at denial, seizes a peat hook from the chimney corner and savagely pursues the wrecker of his hopes out through the door. Before the rest have recovered from their surprise, he is back again with his same old swagger, boasting that, if he had not killed his father before, he is now, at least, as good as his romancing. But the fascination of his wild tales has faded away. *Pegeen Mike* turns from him, sneering, "I'll say, a strange man is a marvel with his mighty talk, but what's a squabble in your back yard, and the blow of a loy, have taught me that there's a great gap between a gallous story and a dirty deed."

Even as she speaks, and the rest are knotting a halter for *Christy's* neck, *Old Mahon* comes again to the door to prove his son a liar anew and to carry him away.

Christy, however, is audacious even in defeat. As he departs he turns to say: "Ten thousand blessings upon all that's here, for you've turned me a likely gaffer in the end of all, the way I'll go romancing through a romping lifetime from this hour to the dawning of the judgment day!"

As he disappears the group in the tavern turn to their mugs of porter. But *Pegeen Mike* only compares the handsome, swaggering young braggart with the thick-witted *Shawn* who is now to be her fate, and cries in despair: "I've lost him surely. I've lost the only Playboy of the Western World!"

Such is this fantasy, so unlike the sentimental melodramas of Irish life usually seen on the stage from the time of Dion Boucicault, that has won literary fame for J. M. Synge on two continents, even while it has stirred the opposition of a faction of his compatriots who charge that it is a slander against Irish character. Let him who reads decide!

As for the Irish Players, they are not skilled actors in the general acceptance of the term. They constitute an endowed

stock company which is committed to definite ideals of simplicity and naturalism in the acting art. The Abbey Theatre in Dublin is assuming the proportions of an Irish National Theatre, the avowed purpose of which is to stimulate Irish dramatic literature and to bring the plays of Irish life close to the native soil. Most conspicuous of the performers in Synge's fantastic play are Mr. Fred O'Donovan, as *Christy Mahon*; Mr. J. M. Kerrigan, as *Shawn Keogh*; Mr. Arthur Sinclair, as *Michael James*, the publican; Miss Eithne Ma Gee, as *Pegeen Mike*, and Miss Sara Allgood, as the *Widow Quin*.

THE popularity of emotional acting rises and recedes with the ability of its professional devotees to accomplish it successfully. Although the paradox of the theatre, that audiences are never quite so happy as when they are sad, is probably as true of the present as of the past, the fact remains that the disciples of the school of Miss Clara Morris are gradually growing fewer in numbers. The only notable example of the present season is Miss Helen Ware, whose new play, "The Price," by Mr. George Broadhurst, is an undisguised attempt to collect its toll of tears by wrenching at the heartstrings.

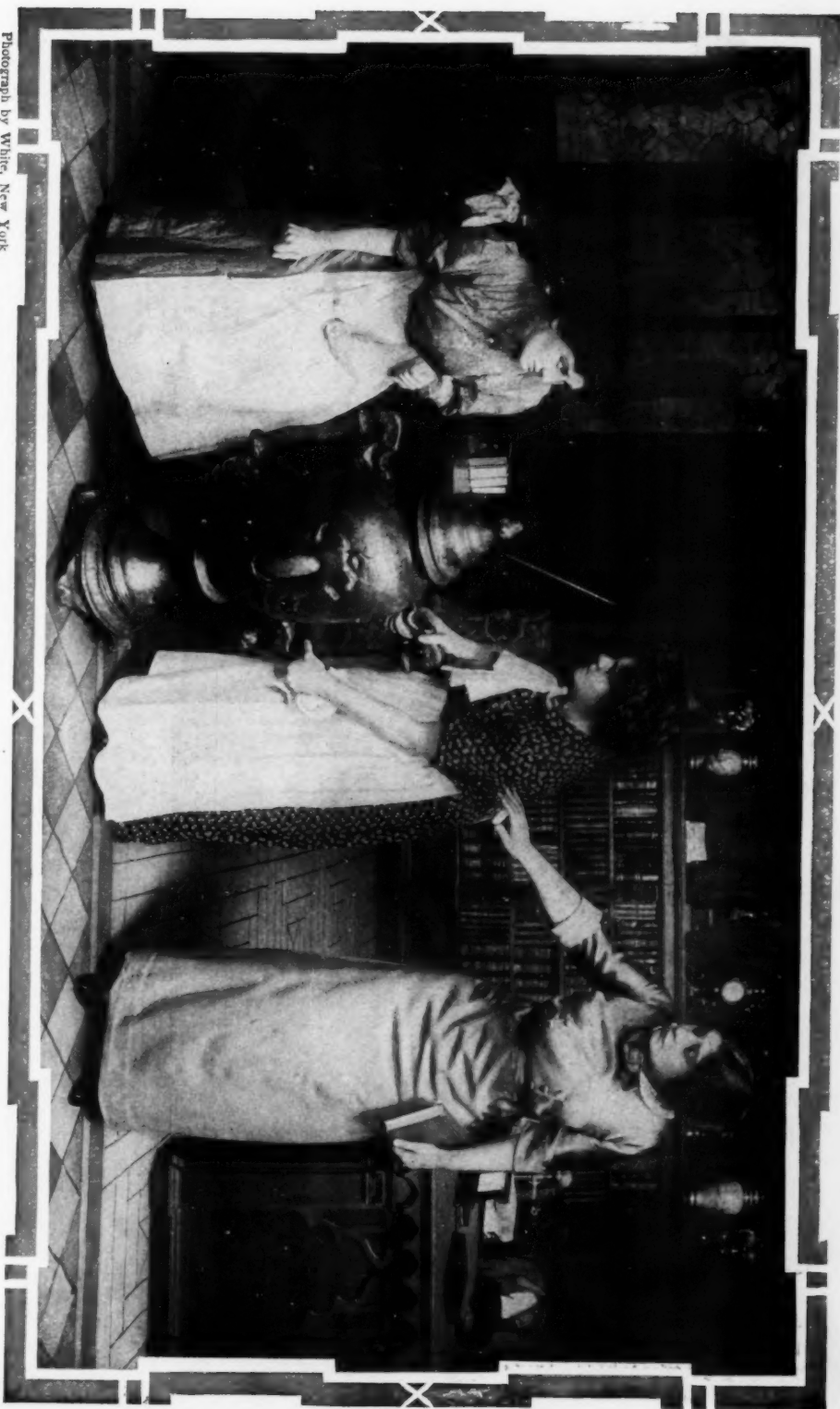
This mournful story of ungoverned love and its bitter retribution opens in the home of *Stanard Dole*, a painter whose artistic ambitions have been stifled by the household drudge whom he married in early manhood and soon outgrew intellectually. *Mrs. Dole*, though endowed with all the plain domestic virtues, is an aggressive, matter-of-fact woman whose instincts are bounded by the horizon of her household activities and who could not, even if she would, supply a stimulus for her husband's aesthetic aspirations.

Into *Stanard Dole's* life there finally comes, as his secretary, *Ethel Toscani*, a girl of sensitive nature and artistic temperament, the daughter of an American mother and Italian father, who is all that *Dole's* wife is not and who gradually takes a place in his affections.

This affinity, at first unconscious, ob-

Photograph by White, New York

Margaret McWade as *Susan*; Jessie Ralph as *Mrs. Dole* and Helen Ware as *Etzel Toscani* in "The Price"





Photograph by White, New York
Helen Ware as *Ethel Toscani* and Harrison Hunter
as *Dr. Bristol* in "The Price"

tains a grip upon the lives of both, but not without the knowledge of the observant *Mrs. Dole*, who is silently resentful of the younger woman who has supplanted her in her husband's interests. At length *Ethel*, who, before she became *Dole's* secretary, had given her promise to marry *Dr. Bristol*, a self-satisfied physician, awakens to a realization of her position and the obligation which she is violating. Her fiancé is eager to announce their engagement, but *Ethel* pleads to postpone it, desiring first to tell the painter that her duty is to another. When, at last, she makes the disclosure and convinces the painter how hopeless is his passion, *Dole* is suddenly stricken with heart disease, a malady of which he has long been a victim, and dies on the spot.

The remainder of the play is the pitiless aftermath of *Ethel's* early experience—the price she pays. She is now the wife of *Dr. Bristol*, who is a loyal and devoted husband, but her guilty consciousness of the unhappiness she once brought into the life of *Mrs. Dole* will give her no peace of mind. She even imagines that her husband is turning from her, as *Dole* had turned from his wife, and her unreasoning jealousy vents itself upon the young girl whom she has invited to make her home at the *Bristol* house.

As a pursuing and relentless Nemesis finally comes *Mrs. Dole*. *Dr. Bristol*, noting *Ethel's* mental agitation, has decided to engage a housekeeper to relieve her of all domestic cares, and *Mrs. Dole*, who is now in financial straits, applies for the position. Unaware that the presence of the artist's widow will only increase his wife's unrest, he engages her without dreaming that a cruel revenge is the woman's hidden motive for entering the household.

Little by little *Mrs. Dole* contrives to fan the spark of jealousy already glowing in *Ethel's* heart. By cunning innuendo she sows the seeds of new suspicion in her mistress' mind, until, when *Dr. Bristol* absents himself from the house at a time when her young friend is also away, and, on his return, evades her demands for an explanation, *Ethel's* now



Photograph by White, New York

Mabel Bert as *Mrs. Ida Flower* and William H. Crane as *Senator Christopher Larkin* in
"The Senator Keeps House"

frenzied jealousy explodes in a paroxysm of bitter accusations and reproaches. *Dr. Bristol's* mission has been merely to prevent his wife's friend's marriage to a cocaine victim, but *Mrs. Dole* sees in the wife's wrong suspicion an opening for her final cruel revenge. She will lead *Ethel* into a confession to her husband of her former guilty relation with *Stanard Dole*.

The chance comes during the quarrel between husband and wife, when *Mrs. Dole* bursts into the room with a journal that purports to be *Stanard Dole's* diary. As she reads entry after entry, *Ethel's* guilty agitation grows, and with it the rage of the husband, who is now convinced that his confidence in her had been deceived during the long courtship. At last, when the most damning item is

about to be read, *Ethel* breaks down, abjectly confesses and begs for forgiveness. Her husband tears himself from her in disgust and leaves the house, declaring that he will never return.

And now a final pitiful discovery! *Ethel*, dazed and hopeless, mechanically opens the diary that has worked her undoing, only to discover that its pages are blank. *Mrs. Dole* who, herself, did not more than suspect the artist's clandestine relationship with his secretary, has cunningly tricked her victim into a confession. The Nemesis has overtaken its prey!

Ethel's eyes wander to her husband's medicine kit, which lies beside her on the table. That will be her means of escape from the tangle into which her guilty conscience has betrayed her. But the vial is knocked from her hand by her watchful maid and there is reason to infer, at the curtain's final fall, that *Dr. Bristol* will return and relent to the woman who, if false as his sweetheart, at least has been faithful as his wife.

It is not difficult to detect the dubious coincidences which are necessary to help "The Price" along its tearful course to its undeniably emotionally effective climax. The fact cannot go unobserved that, in conditions of actual life, *Mrs. Dole* would never have succeeded in gaining admission to the *Bristol* household. The wife's guilty conscience would have impelled her to resist so delicate and dangerous a state of affairs. It also needs a less obtuse husband than *Dr. Bristol* is represented to be to arouse much real sympathy for him in his predicament. However, these are common faults of emotional melodrama and the essential fact remains that "The Price," in spite of its far-fetched episodes, affords excellent opportunities for the vivid displays of violent emotionalism by Miss Ware for which it was evidently created. The depth of anguish of the soul is not always to be measured by the volume of lung power with which it is expressed, but, by the accepted standards of emotional acting, Miss Ware's performance rings true. Much closer to actual life is the cold, hard, repressed, designing character of *Mrs.*

Dole as impersonated by Miss Jessie Ralph. Hers is a performance which makes a profound impression by its sheer authority and unquestionable sincerity. Mr. Harrison Hunter appears as *Dr. Bristol*, and Mr. Warner Oland is *Stanard Dole*, whose yearning for æsthetic encouragement rather than well baked biscuits, in the first act, is the source of the torment which, in the end, troubles so many lives.

IT was only a question of time until Mr. William H. Crane would be sent back to Congress, so to speak. In Mr. David D. Lloyd and Mr. Sydney Rosenfeld's old play, "The Senator," in which he acted with great success just twenty-one years ago, he was *Senator Hannibal Rivers*, a Solon from the Northwest, who was busy championing the "Denman claim" and wooing *Mabel Denman*, the daughter of the claimant. Now, in Miss Martha Morton's new comedy, "The Senator Keeps House," he is *Senator Christopher Larkin*, engaged in opposing the "Mason claim" and resisting the charms of the claimant herself, who is an elderly widow. To all intents, *Senator Christopher Larkin* is still *Senator Hannibal Rivers*, but two decades older and serving another term at Washington under an *alias*.

The new play is a pleasant, if not very exciting, little affair which reveals Mr. Crane in those moods and perplexities in which his audiences like him best. *Senator Larkin*, whose pet aversion is widows, is harassed at home by the servant problem and in the Senate by the Mason land claim, which, he feels confident, is a political steal. At a time when his housekeeper has suddenly walked out and left him and his nephew in the lurch, one of his dishonest colleagues who is promoting the bill, succeeds in introducing *Mrs. Flower*, the claimant, into his home to take the vacant position. The *Senator* does not know that *Mason* was her family name before she married and was left a widow. As for *Mrs. Flower*, she does not suspect that the land for which she thinks she is entitled to \$50,000, is going to be worked off on the Government for \$400,-



Photograph by White, New York
William W. Jefferson as *Jasper*; Mabel Bert as *Mrs. Ida Flower*; Marion Kerby as *Honeysuckle*; William H. Crane as *Senator Christopher Larkin*; Lorraine Frost as *Miss Eva Flower*; Jack Devereau as *Patrick Henry Larkin* in "The Senator Keeps House."

000, the difference to find its way into the pockets of *Congressman Adolphus Judson* and his thieving clique.

Mrs. Flower proves to be a model housekeeper—which pleases *Senator Larkin* immensely. Her daughter, *Eva*, is adorable, which is equally consoling to *Patrick Henry Larkin*, the *Senator's* nephew and secretary. With their coming the domestic trials of the two men take flight. Order reigns where confusion once held sway. The *Senator's* papers are now always in place and tied up with pink ribbons. His black satin senatorial cravat is tucked away in lavender in his bureau drawer. His house and library are spick and span. Everything suddenly runs on greased wheels. So carefully does *Mrs. Flower* guard even the *Senator's* health that he finds himself reduced to the necessity of stealing his own cigars.

All unsuspecting, he goes on fighting the Mason claim. He investigates the land and finds that, instead of being a salubrious plateau, ideally situated for an old soldiers' hospital, it is a dank, malaria-breeding swamp. When the question of the purchase comes to a crisis, he boldly sets out to expose his dishonest colleagues and to brand the Mason claimant as a fraud.

Meanwhile *Mrs. Flower's* domestic virtues have completely altered his opinion of the feminine sex. The quiet, efficient little woman, who seems to know intuitively how to anticipate his most trivial wishes, is slowly but surely making her way into his heart. As for *Eva*, her daughter, her slightest whim has become his law. *Patrick Henry* is completely enthralled by her, and this, too, pleases the *Senator* mightily.

So well regulated has *Senator Larkin's* household become that he decides to give a reception at a time when the fight over the Mason claim is the topic of the hour. *Mrs. Flower* is to preside as the hostess

and *Eva* is to make her *début* into the whirl of Washington social life. But the wives of the other senators and congressmen do not appear. The reception is turned into a humiliating fizzle and not until then does *Senator Larkin* discover, through a designing woman who has been angling for his heart, that he is harboring in his home the Mason claimant herself.

Naturally *Senator Larkin* feels that his confidence has been imposed upon. He is in no mood to listen to explanations. It doesn't occur to him that *Mrs. Flower* is only the innocent tool of *Congressman Judson* and his crowd. These disclosures are not made until the next day, when *Patrick Henry* and *Eva* have further added to his mortification by eloping. Then come the necessary explanations, and *Mrs. Flower's* complete exoneration. With his knowledge of the land deal, *Senator Larkin* is able to put the conspirators to rout and defeat the claim, which does not harm *Mrs. Flower* at all, since he retains her, not as a housekeeper, but as his wife.

Senator Larkin is a typical Crane rôle. He is outwardly bluff, aggressive and hot-tempered, but inwardly he is kindly, tender and generous. All these qualities Mr. Crane makes clear with the little touches of humor and pathos which he knows so well how to apply. Before the play is ended you cannot help pitying the *Senator* a little, in fact, for *Mrs. Flower*, as Miss Mabel Bert impersonates her, is such a quiet, determined domestic tyrant that you feel sure the *Senator* will have to go through the remainder of his life stealing his own cigars and finding his papers tied up in pink ribbons. Mr. Jack Devereau and Miss Lorraine Frost are the younger pair, and Mr. Harry Harwood and Miss Esther Lyon are the political schemers who come so close to turning the *Senator's* cake into dough.